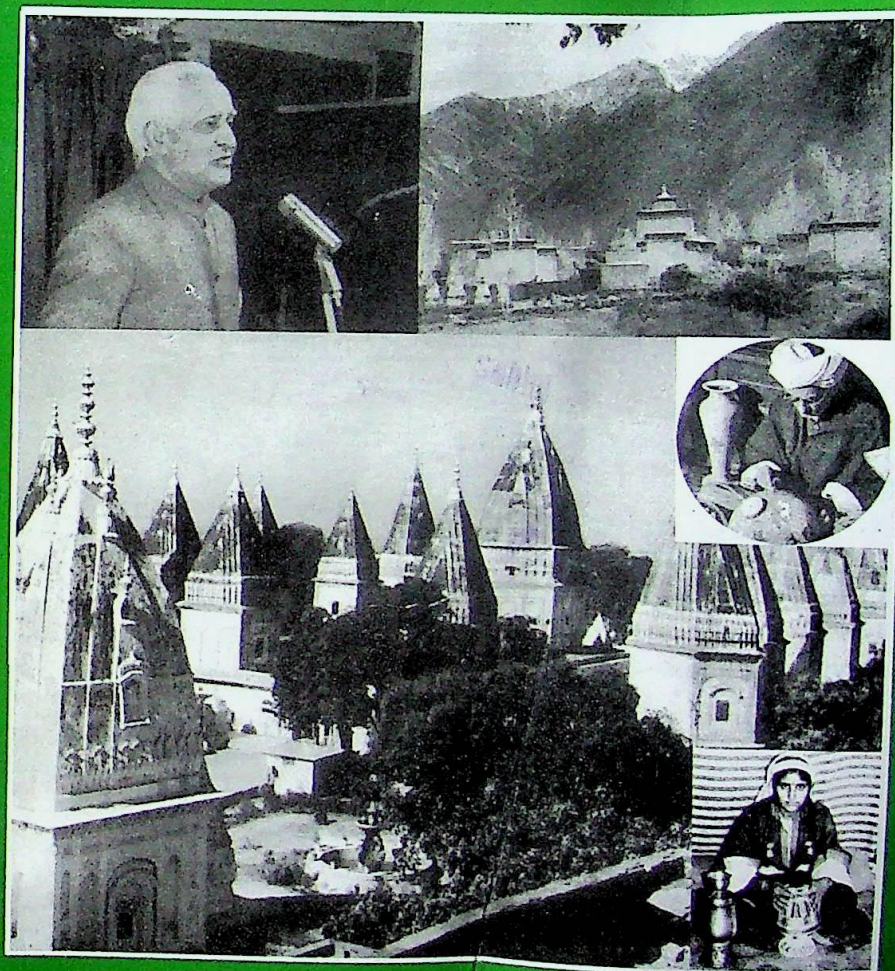


GLIMPSES OF KASHMIR- JAMMU-LADAKH

Prof. P.N. Pushp Memorial Volume



**Editors : S.L. Pandit
P. Kachroo
S.N. Dhar**

This Book

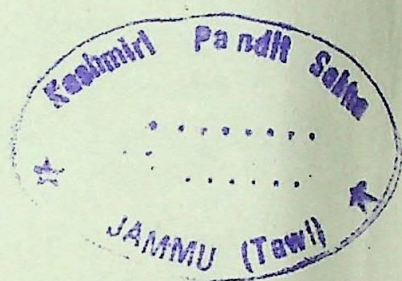
Glimpse of Kashmir, Jammu & Ladakh : History and Culture as the title suggests provides a glimpse of multi-faceted history and culture of the Jammu & Kashmir State. Specialist scholars in various fields of Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh — the three regions of the J&K State have in their scholarly expositions provided indepth studies of archaeology, literature, Shavism, architecture, philosophy, ancient history, religion with special reference to monasteries, Buddhist art etc.

This volume has been dedicated to the loving and respectful memory of late Prof. P.N. Pushp — a great scholar-teacher, who had taught several generations of students of the J&K State.

This book covers all the above mentioned fields in four parts, namely (i) Prof Pushp : Scholar and Man; (ii) Archeology; (iii) Cultural Panorama; and (iv) Literature.

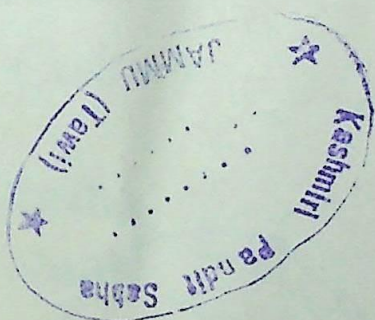
These words from the Foreword, sums-up the core of this book : "The purpose is basically to reiterate Kashmir's (and also of Jammu & Ladakh) long history—classical and contemporary, contributions made by historian-writers...; of harmony and synthesis of various relegions and cultures...There are equally learned contributions on Kishmir's architecture, monastries of Alchi and Buddhist art (Ladakh), Dogra art, folk theatre etc. (Jammu)..."



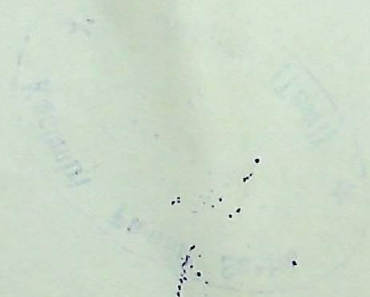


GLIMPSES OF KASHMIR, JAMMU and LADAKH
History and Culture

Prof. P.N. PUSHPA Memorial Volume

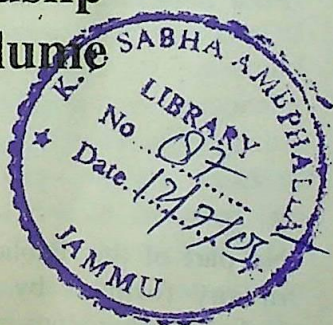


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GLIMPSES OF KASHMIR, JAMMU and LADAKH *History and Culture*

Prof. P. N. Pushp
Memorial Volume



Editors

S.L. Pandit
P. Kachroo
Som Nath Dhar

Coordinator

B.L. Kaul Chaman

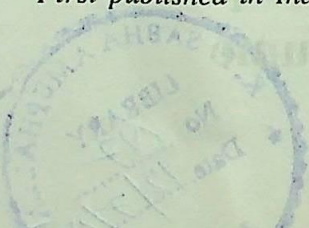
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Glimpses of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh
History and Culture

Prof. P N Pushp Memorial Volume

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PREFACE

Some friends, some scholars and mostly quite a number of old students of Professor P.N. Pushp have joined together to contribute their tributes to the memory of Pushpji in this volume. Professor Pushp was a few years younger to me and hailed like myself from a rural region of Anantnag District in Kashmir. I knew him since his student days though I missed the chances of having him as a student of mine or as a colleague at the college level. I am sure the loss in this regard is mine, for he was surely one of those rare seekers of knowledge from whom even an earnest teacher of his could learn a few things. As most of us who knew him personally or by repute could easily accept him as a knowledgeable linguistic, converting his research not only into the bases of old classical language, like Sanskrit and Persian, but also into the very heart of our Kashmiri mother tongue, spoken by a comparatively smaller number of people and yet comprising certain exceptional linguistic and phonetic traits rare among the Aryan tongues, as propounded eruditely by that great linguistic Indian scholar known to many of us as Dr. Siddheshwar Varma.

From the write-ups in this volume, I can easily gather that he must have been a teacher of outstanding merit who not only does full justice to his subject but also inspires among his pupils a love for his person as a human personality of rare qualities. As observed above, through the contingencies of government postings, I missed an opportunity of having him as a colleague at any of the institutions where both he and I worked at different times. But, as a kind and considerate friend, I came to know him over the years. I recall he would never

miss an opportunity of meeting me or of calling on me. I remember with poignant sorrow that when I returned here from a thirteen month unbroken stay in U.S.A. in November 1985, I was keen to call on him on learning that he was rather seriously ill. But by a cruel contingency of fate, I got overwhelmed by a personal tragedy as, soon after my arrival here, I got news of the sudden and unexpected demise of one of my grand-daughters who was settled in Canada and whom I had met before I returned home to India. So I felt overwhelmed with gratitude when Professor Pushp, in spite of his ill health, felt like calling on me to condole with me in my cruel bereavement. Believe it or not, only a short while later I learnt that Pushpji had breathed his last; and when soon after I tried to call on his widow and family, I was disappointed to learn that they had already left Delhi soon after his demise. But such is life, with its rare joys and unseen and unexpected sorrows. We human creatures have to learn to accept it with courage and fortitude.

“Vishnupad” C-36,
Pamposh Enclave
New Delhi—110048

(Prof.) S.L. Pandit
(Formerly of the Universities
of J & K and Punjab)

FOREWORD

Down the centuries, Kashmir has had repeated upheavals of immense magnitude. Segments of the population were forced into migration to near and distant places. And yet, wherever a Kashmiri has stayed, his/her love for Mother Kashmir ('*MAUJ KASHEER*') and, Kashmir's unique traditions and culture, has remained unflinching.

This compilation, a labour of love by distinguished litterateurs, covers a wide range of subjects relating to Kashmir. The purpose is basically to reiterate Kashmir's long history—classical and contemporary, contributions made by historian-writers, adepts at statecraft; of harmony and synthesis of various religions and cultures, propounded by mystic seers and *rishis*. There are equally learned contributions on Kashmir's architecture, monastries of Alichia and Buddhist art, Dogra art, folk theatre, etc.

Mystic seers like Abhinavgupta, Lal Ded, Nund Rishi, Parmanand, etc., advocated love, harmony and brotherhood among mankind. To them, the "Rasa Lila of life was incomplete until man dived deep into the 'Ocean of joy' and soaked the personality in the spirit."

The poets and writers of modern period had differing compulsions. Zinda Kaul was a mystic of robust optimism. Mahjoor hoped to see his prophecy "Kashmir alone shall awaken the East from the long, long slumber" come true. Arif advocated a healing synthesis between patriotic feelings and humanism. He "covered political transition from monarchy to 'New Kashmir' in various aspects." Nadim proved a trend-setter in the Kashmiri language and free verse and utilized folk techniques in his writings. Asi and Roshan mounted the

avalanche of peoples' resistance against tribal invaders in Kashmir in 1947. Whereas Azad's revolutionary poetry was a crusade against religious fanaticism, Maqbool Kralawari exposed the hypocrisy of the *Pirs* and, through the popular medium of poetry, awakened the slumbering peasantry to action.

This volume, I understand, is dedicated to the hallowed memory of Prof. Pushp. Some chapters in this compendium are his contributions. A quick survey of the wide range of his interests and contributions becomes appropriate. All his life, Prof. Pushp engrossed himself in digging out the rich heritage of Kashmir, assiduously studying and interpreting history, travelogues, accounts of litterateurs; scrutinised manuscripts in Sanskrit, Sharda and Devanagri (the last two since extinct), as well as Persian manuscripts, archaeological remains and finds. With his enormous zeal, research and survey (of Harwan remains, etc.), he enriched the State Department's Research and Museum collections with valuable finds of manuscripts, sculptures, paintings, scrolls, reliefs, documents, terracota etc. These have since become a valuable source of information for researchers.

Prof. Pushp chaired numerous conferences with distinction. The seminars he conducted in Kashmir and all over the country are legion. His understanding of the works and lives of Kalhana, Bilhana, Ksemendra, Jonaraja, Abhinavgupta, Avantivarman and other classical luminaries was deep and rich. Through his learned critiques, he confirmed the fact that Kashmir had made a most substantial contribution to Sanskrit verse.

Prof. Pushp spoke on the Upanishads, Buddhism, Jainism, Kashmir's mysticism, Urdu poet Iqbal's works etc. with equal ease. He pinpointed the effect of Indian poetics on Kashmir's mysticism and its assimilation into literature, life and folklore. He wrote at length on the Kashmiri language (which, unfortunately, still has no script of its own); its linguistic and phonetic traits (rare among the Aryan tongues), its complicated

grammar, proverbs, satire, etc. He dealt with works of pedagogical nature, like *Zaan Pahchan* in Kashmiri.

Every encounter with Prof. Pushp was an inspiring experience. His was the best possible illustration of what may be called a photogenic memory. At a seminar on the folklore of Kashmir at the Kashmir University, where I was also a participant, Prof. Pushp delivered the most learned speech, without even consulting notes, whereas, we, all participants, read out our papers. The best applause of the seminar was indubitably his.

Prof. Pushp was a rare many-sided genius. In the edifying words of Shakespeare: His life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world: "This was a man."

Shri Brij Lal Kaul Chaman deserves commendation for the enormous, sustained efforts he has put in collecting and collating this diverse material.

Moti Lal Saqi

COORDINATOR'S NOTE

It was on December 31, 1994 that a meeting was held in Pamposh School premises at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi to honour some of our senior distinguished Kashmiri scholars. A few friends and members of the cultural wing of the Kashmir Education, Cultural and Science Society such as Dr. S. Bhatt, Emeritus Scientist P. Kachroo, Shri S. L. Shali, Dr. K. Warikoo, Shri R. N. Kaw and myself decided in this first meeting to bring out a series of felicitation volumes on prominent Kashmiri scholars in the field of arts, science, history and education. It was agreed to bring out the first volume to honour the well known eminent Kashmiri scholar Prof. P.N. Pushp. This group also decided that I coordinate the professional and editorial activities. For this volume Profs. S.L. Pandit, P. Kachroo and Somnath Dhar were nominated as editors.

It was decided to select a broad-based approach for this volume keeping in view the extensive academic interests of Prof. Pushp and also present a holistic account of ancient Kashmir. Prof. Pushp was a great scholar, a pleasing personality. His judicious exposition, liberal outlook, burning enthusiasm for keeping the spirit of *Kashmiriyat* alive, correct the interpretation of versions wrongly put forth by some scholars, unbiased presentation of factual versions of ancient thought and methodical research made him a world renowned scholar. Subsequently, a number of scholars were requested to contribute papers. The response was overwhelming. However, notwithstanding their busy routine, few of them could keep the date. We are grateful to them.

At times the political conditions prevailing in India in general, and in Kashmir in particular, were so depressing that

most of the people lost hope in the democratic and secular setup of our country. The future seemed dark and gloomy. Indirectly this halted progress and some of the experts, erstwhile colleagues and students of prof. Pushp from Kashmir, could not send their contributions.

It was planned to release the volume on Prof. Pushp's next birthday, but God willed otherwise. Suddenly Prof. Pushp left for his heavenly abode on 19th September, 1996. The volume is now being released as 'Pushp Memorial' volume.

It is with the encouragement of the editors and efforts of S/Shri P.N. Kaw, Onkar Kachru, L.C. Kaul, Dr. S.S. Toshkhani and last but not the least Late S.L. Shali that our hope was restored. Shali Sahib devoted his time and energy by meeting many authors personally in Jammu and Delhi. As a result of endeavours of all these, especially of O. Kachru's patient and sustained efforts, this volume is in your hands. I must also thank the publishers especially Shri Susheel Anand, for their profound cooperation, who despite many odds brought out this valuable work.

B.L. Kaul 'Chaman'
Co-ordinator

Prof. P.N. Pushp's Contribution

Apart from being a farsighted educationist, Prof. Prithvi Nath Pushp was a prolific writer. He wrote in five major languages: Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi, English and Sanskrit. Main areas of his scholarly study were: (1) Cultural Currents and Cross-currents of Kashmir History. (2) Literary Heritage of Kashmir (including Folklore). (3) Kashmiri Linguistics (including Linguagologies). (4) Art and Archaeology of Kashmir, and (5) Manuscriptology of Kashmir (Sanskrit, Persian and Kashmiri).

It would need one full chapter to compile the list of Pushpji's works (including translations), research papers, studies and monographs etc. (mostly on Kashmiri language and literature). But it would be sufficient to mention only a few examples here to show the sweep of Prof. Pushp's scholarship:

The Tamil Encyclopaedia, Madras; *The Hindi Encyclopaedia* (Vishvakosh), Varanasi; *Sankara Kurup Commemoration Volume*, Kerala; *Mahadevi Varma Abhinandan Granth*, Prayag; *Anhaar* (Kashmiri), Kashmir University, Srinagar; *Contemporary Indian Literature*, New Delhi; *Chaturdasha-Bhasha-Nibandhaval*, Patna; *The Poona Orientalist* (Quarterly), Poona.

Kashmir's Contribution to Sanskrit Poetry; *Kashmir's Contribution to Indian Poetics*; *Khemendra's Satire*; *Requisites of Kashmirology*; *Early Remnants of Kashmiri Verse* (Kashmiri); *Buddhistic Contours of Kashmir History and Culture*; *Aurobindo's Aesthetics and Kashmiri Poetry*; *Sitikanth's Mysticism*; *Shams Faqir's Mystical Muse* (Kashmiri); *Kashmiri Language: A Fresh Lookup*; *Abhinavgupta: Person and Perspective* (Hindi); *Kashmir As Seen By Huen Tsiang*; *Hindi in Kashmir* (As a literary activity in Kashmir); *Historical Moorings of the Rishi Order in Kashmir* (Urdu); *Kalhana and His*

Contribution; Tagore and Kashmiri Verse; Tarana-e-Sarood (An edited work on Kashmiri Music); *Persian Poetry in Kashmir; Tarikh-e-Hasan*, Vol. IV (Edited); *the Stones Speak: Archaeology in Kashmir; Textual Misups and Corruption* (with reference to *Vaak and Shruk*); *Textual Reduction* (with special reference to Abhinavgupta's *Tantrasara*); Grierson's *Sources on Kashmiri: A Critical Assessment on Kashmiri Grammar*.

Some of the papers presented at various seminars and symposia:

National Seminar on Aurobindo (Varanasi); All India Seminar on Mysticism (Srinagar); Afro-Asian Seminar on Tradition & Change in Literature (at Alma Ata, USSR); International Seminar on Jainism & Buddhism (Cuttak); International Seminar on Tagore (New Delhi); International Seminar on Sufism (New Delhi); and International Seminar on Iqbal.



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INTRODUCTION

Chapter I

THE LIFE OF PROF. PUSHP K. SHARMA

PART I

PROF PUSHP : SCHOLAR & MAN

TRIBUTES

Chapter 1

PROF. P.N. PUSHP AS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST

SARDARI LAL SHALI

Prof. P.N. Pushp, with his dynamic spirit and ceaseless energy brought lustre to the Department of Archaeology in the State during the tenure he held the charge of the Department along with its associated wings of Research and Museums. He always took keen interest in enriching the collection of artefacts in the S.P.S. Museum at Srinagar and the Dogra Art Gallery at Jammu. Both the institutions are now true representative centres of our integrative cultures. He once earned the wrath of his counterpart in the Central Department of Archaeology in the State when he was pained to see an inscription lying covered under cow dung at a centrally protected monument at Tapar, district Baramulla. He immediately had it cleaned and shifted it to the museum for display but had to return it to the site under very trying circumstances. Even after retirement from active service, he took all the more interest in archaeological research. In early eighties, he in the company of Shri R.S. Bisht, the then Superintending Archaeologist J&K Circle and now the Director, Institute of Archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India, New Dehli, located Buddhist remains at the top-most area of the Harwan monastery and thus for the first time opened a new chapter for further research in excavating

or exploring the entire range of the hill, on the bottom of which lay the exposed ruins of the Buddhist monument.

He always held the contention that archaeology alone provides an authentic source material for writing the ancient history of Kashmir. This is evident from his own writing recorded in his paper "Kashmiri Encyclopaedia Project, Problems and Perspective". Illustrating the problem, he stated that the word archaeology meant (Webster's *New World Dictionary*) "the scientific study of the life and culture of ancient people as by the excavations of ancient sites, artefacts, etc." Now the same entry in a one-volume encyclopaedia on Kashmirology would merit a fairly condensed yet comprehensive write up on a number of sub-entries such as: Concept of archaeology: techniques of archaeological exploration, excavation, restoration, renovation and preservation, techniques of carbon-dating and piecing together prehistory. Archaeological sites of the ancient civilizations and cultures: Burzahom and the Ambaran, archaeological reconstruction of man's past, Indian history and Kashmir history; archaeological chronology (including palaeography; epigraphy and numismatics) : archaeology in the State Museum and so on. In a separate volume (in the encyclopaedia) devoted to archaeology, each of the sub-entries mentioned would become an entry in its own right with further break-up into a number of sub-items according to techniques, sites, tools and findings including artefacts and later development of art and architecture. All this shows the modern and scientific outlook of Prof Pushp in conducting archaeological research in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Chapter 2

MY TEACHER EXTRAORDINARY

R.L. SHANT

I came in contact with Prof. Pushp for the first time in A.S. College, Srinagar in 1955 when I was his student in Hindi (optional) and Sanskrit (elective) classes though I had been taking interest in creative literary activities earlier in S.P. College owing to the encouragement and inspiration of my teachers there. It was in A.S. College under the tutelage of Prof. Pushp that my sphere and depth of literary interests increased. Never after those two years of my association with my teacher extraordinary did I come across another teacher like him who taught me as well as other students without ever creating or letting creep into our psyche a gap that is apt to be there between a teacher and his taughts. No gap or distance was ever allowed by him so that we never imagined that we were not part of the enactment of the great literary creations that he presented in our class-room every day. He would say that he never believed in teaching and he proved it himself daily before us. He recreated poetry, re-enlivened fictional characters and reopened the vistas of the creative processes that the writers had gone through and that had supposedly closed after the actual transfer of thought and solve the paper. I recall Prof. Pushp's teaching of Sanskrit prose that was very terse and syntactically complex, including Bana's "Kadambari". His method was so illustrative that we never felt like asking him for the Hindi equivalent of a Sanskrit word or phrase. While recreating the text he would give us a host of such easier

Sanskrit equivalents that we assimilated instantaneously without being conscious of the psychological phenomenon, we were passing through. While teaching us Hindi, contemporary and old, from our Hindi textbooks, Kashmiri, Urdu and some other Indian languages came handy to him for ready reference. This inculcated in us a curiosity to know more and more about them; and fortunately we had not to confine our information to textual references alone. Gradually it dawned upon us that most of eminent writers he referred to were his personal friends, who came to see him in the college; some even staying with him. Like him, some of literary and cultural committees and organizations of local, national and international levels. I have not seen or met another college teacher of Prof. Pushp's eminence, who enjoyed such prestige during those days. Suffice it to record that we were fortunate to meet and talk to writers like Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', Balkrishna Sharma 'Naveen', Sumitra Nandan Pant, Prabhakar Machwe, Upendra Nath 'Ashok', Amrit Lal Nagar, Hazari Prasad Dwevedi and Rahul Sankrityayan to name a few.

I do owe my extra curricular interest in writers outside the text books to our organisation Kashmir Hindi Sahitya Sammelan where some of my senior friends like Toshkhani Nirash, Kemmu, Hari Krishan etc were zestfully helping ourselves develop. But I believe that without teachers like Prof. Pushp, my creative fervour would have been overcome by sloth. For example I cannot forget that day in my life when my professor wished (he never ordered) that we to take the great septugenarian (at that time) writer of international repute, Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan round Srinagar in the afternoon. Due to the good offices of Prof. Pushp, Rahuljee had consented to deliver a lecture to the staff and students of A.S. College (that way in 1956) on his travels through Central Asia and the Far East and his research activities on "Greater India". In the evening Rahuljee was scheduled to talk at a public meeting organised by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in the hall of Seva Sadan, Kral Khud, Srinagar. Rahuljee wished

to go to some places of interest, nearby, Knowing a little about him and his areas of interest I took him to the S.P.S. Museum on the Bund. Within 10 minutes of the entry of the "scantly clad ascetic", the desolate lanes between dusty idols in the semi-dark halls of the Museum, came alive with discussion and activity. The curator and other staff members were taken by surprise as they never knew that on that fateful day for them their knowledge of history, archaeology, iconography, chronological dating of artefacts and curios would be questioned by such a critic and knowledgeable person as Rahul Sankrityayan. I, as an undergraduate student understood little of what went on. But I did not fail to realise who Rahul was and how fortunate I was to be with him. I realise now how my queries about his life in the U.S.S.R (he had a wife and son there and he was a member of the C.P.S.U), about the socialist system versus the rights and initiatives of an individual, about technical terms being coined in Hindi, about Hindi writing in non-Hindi speaking areas etc. should have looked trifling to him, though he never showed the slightest disinclination to answer my boyish curiosities. In the evening we reached Kral Khud and he addressed about there hundred lovers of Hindi about Kashmir, Kashmiri connections with Central Asia and Tibet as experienced by him during his visits there. Next day Prof. Pushp 'rebriefed' us in the college, making it sure that the experience I had gone through the previous day had taught me something and given me some insight of the great writer. It was because of such interest that Prof. Pushp took in me that my liking for literature and literary activities increased day by day. It was one main reason, besides my grooming in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, that I went for post-graduate studies in Hindi literature to Allahabad, the "Paris of modern Hindi writing". Otherwise, I was a "double course mathematics" student and had topped in the J&K University mainly because of mathematics.

Chapter 3

PROF. PUSHP : SOME REMINISCENCES

K.L. BHALLA

According to Sir Richard Livingstone, "What is the aim of education ? Its aim is to know the first-rate in any subject that we study, with a view to achieving it as nearly as our powers allow".

It was my good luck to serve under Prof. P.N. Pushp when he was the Principal of Govt. Degree College, Poonch. He lived upto the aim of education as stated above. The College under his stewardship registered allround progress. He was Professor of Sanskrit but he spoke and wrote English in a superb manner. He asked students to collect folk-songs and stories. Even now the students of those days remember him lovingly.

Prof. Pushp was our guide, friend and philosopher. He served the College loyally and held aloft its inspiring motto 'कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते'. Eminent as a Professor, he was a reputed authority on many aspects of the subjects he taught. He was the idol of the students. He inspired and quickened in their minds a thirst for knowledge and research. With him the path of duty was the path to glory. We cannot forget his many acts of kindness and love. We shall ever remember with gratitude the solicitude he showed for the welfare of the student community.

During 1965 Indo-Pak war, teachers and students of Poonch College did commendable work under his guidance. He along with staff and students went to the border, repaired roads

and did a lot to assist the Army. Many persons were uprooted because of shelling and they were rehabilitated and served. He was a source of encouragement to all of us. He was living alone those days and I requested him to move to my house but he declined. He was a great disciplinarian. Once in my presence he rebuked his son who was a student of the College for taking part in a demonstration. He was mild and soft-spoken but he was firm when the situation demanded stern action. He laid stress on character-building. It was not through preaching but setting an example. Well, "example is better than precept", runs the adage.

I still remember those days when seminars and symposia were held in the College where in many prominent citizens took part. During those days teacher-parent meets were a regular feature to sort out problems. The inaugural number of the College magazine *Aaeena* was unique in the sense that it contained valuable information on many topics, including Poonch region.

Like Krishna Chandra, Prof. Pushp loved Poonch and the residents of Poonch were grateful to him for the pains he took to develop the College. He was a source of inspiration even to those who did not belong to the Poonch College. Raj Bhalla, my wife, still remembers him for encouraging her to write.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self control. These three alone lead man to sovereign power". These words of Tennyson sum up the multi-faceted personality of Prof. Pushp.

Chapter 4

PROFESSOR PUSHP AS I KNEW HIM

MANOHAR TRAKROO

It was during those halcyon days when we Kashmiris used to “dance with the daffodils”, without a care in the world, that I had a brief encounter with Pushp Sahib which remains etched in my memory. Not that I had not seen him earlier, but this was different. This was my first what could now be called “one-to-one” meeting with him. Till then it was only the nodding acquaintance of a non-descript, shy, student—one among hundreds—with a member of the college teaching staff in Sri Pratap College, Srinagar, where he was teaching Sanskrit. In the College we were not much acquainted because I was not in the group of students allotted to him for teaching. He never actually taught me except on those rare occasions when he deputised for our own teacher, Prof. Govind Joo Razdan, the other Sanskrit teacher. But most students knew Pushp Sahib because we had heard many accounts of his grit and determination in the face of extremely heavy odds. It was said that he overcame the problem of limited or no financial resources in his early life with sheer determination and hard work. With single-minded devotion to his objective and his brilliant intellect he achieved outstanding academic success that was the envy of some of his peers. At a very young age he made it to lecturership in a Government College—a position vastly more coveted those days than it may be now.

There were also other characteristics of his which endeared Pushp Sahib to the students: among a group of

professors, most of them grumpy over being "gazetted" but with little power, he was simplicity and bon homie itself. He was easily accessible to all the students and never wore the "gazetted officer" tag on his chest. But if someone wanted to make use of that status of his and borrow extra books from the library, who else to go to but Prof. Pushp? He would sign his name without even asking you yours.

Above all, he was always smiling—in fact one still found him wearing a broad smile on his rather lean face. Seeing him it was hard to believe that like so many others he too was undergoing the privations of a migrant in Delhi. But he still exuded supreme confidence and optimism, was always bubbling with enthusiasm for one or another activity, always with no time to waste, appearing as if he was all set to proceed to his lovely house in Srinagar's posh Gogji Bagh. There he had built a fabulous library which remained his haunt for most of his active life and where, one would expect, his enormous intellect flowered into making him the many-faceted man of letters that he was, bringing him kudos from all over. Since it is now acceptable to openly flaunt any kind of proximity to the great and the good, I might proclaim that our own house is (or was?) in the same neighbourhood. It is a different matter, and no fault of Pushp Sahib, that none of his scholarship rubbed off on his neighbours like me!

The era I am talking of was when Kashmir was a peaceful land where people lived a cultured life, followed the tenets of *Insaniyat* (humanism) of which people like Pushp Sahib were the embodiment. For the students, young boys and girls, it was people like Pushp Sahib who became the role models, and it was no surprise that he was a much-admired man among them. In fact, it is a point worth pondering over whether post-1989 events would have taken a different and more acceptable course had people of his catholic views, who had a deep and abiding faith in Kashmir's social harmony in spite of considerable cultural differences among sections of its inhabitants, been given a more significant role. But events

which have brought today's tasteless sycophancy and violent hatred even among the silent but sullen people can hardly be un-lived despite their wrenching pain. Perhaps there was something in the ancient Greeks who made philosophers their kings. We could at least have given a more pivotal role to them instead of kow-towing to the herd which only knows how to jump on the band wagon, oblivious of the death, destruction and decay they have brought to our land.

Coming back to my encounter with Pushp Sahib. I had bicycled up to Pampore, some 13 kms from Srinagar, to experience the thrill of the saffron blossom in full bloom. On my way back imagine what I witnessed—Pushp Sahib too had gone to see the saffron blossom! Or rather had taken a very highly respected guest to show him this ethereal sight. It was while cycling back to Srinagar that I espied Prof. Pushp sitting on the rear side of a tonga with Devinder Satyarthi, a literary giant of the time.

Most of us who had some knowledge of Hindi, held Satyarthi in awe and gobbled up all that he wrote. We were familiar with his long hair and flowing beard which remained his emblem for years to come. One considered it great good luck to actually see him—an opportunity hardly offered to Kashmir students, since they were always Valley-bound.

Pushp Sahib possibly noticed the excitement on my face as I pushed my bicycle for a closer look at the great Hindi literateur. As we were nearing Srinagar, he had the tonga stop at a wayside stall and with an impish smile beckoned me to come over. As the two of them were biting into freshly plucked red apples, Pushp Sahib introduced me to Devinder Satyarthi. At this distance of time, I cannot recall what we talked about, but I have no doubt that those few minutes could have seen no weightier conversation than the pointless small talk between a near total ignoramus and the tallest Hindi writer of the time with Prof. Pushp, who was to become an equally prominent intellectual in course of time, and who was trying to instil a bit of confidence in me. In fact I was face to face

with a literary saint only through the goodwill of Pushp Sahib. For me it was in a sense my *Sri Ganesh* to the long chain of great and important people I was destined to meet in my later life!

Post-script: The last I saw of Prof. Pushp was at a small library, struggling to survive in a small residential colony of Delhi. The unknowing but well-meaning clerk was asking the Professor for proof that he had actually returned the book that remained outstanding against his name in the register! Such is life!

Chapter 5

REMEMBERING PUSHP SAHIB

A.N. DHAR

It was with a deep sense of loss and personal involvement that I avidly read the warm commemorative tributes paid to the late Professor P.N. Pushp in the recent two successive issues of the *Koshur Samachar*. One such tribute was paid by the noted journalist, Shri A.N. Dar (in my case spelt as 'Dhar'), which some of my friends mistook as mine in view of our common initials and surname. That made me feel almost guilty of 'filial ingratitude' to the great Professor I too had held in esteem and admired as one of his former students, although my association with him had not been of a long duration.

I have only a poor grounding in basic Sanskrit and what can pass for literary Hindi, bits of which I acquired at the Middle-school standard level. Later as an F.Sc. student at the S.P. College, Srinagar, during the years 1944-46, I had a "taste" of the richness of Hindi poetry thanks mainly to Pushp Sahib, who taught us Hindi as an optional subject, which a student those days could conveniently dispense with. Looking back, I recall how absorbing Pushp Ji's lectures were and how fine his interpretations of poems. He taught with gusto and a flair for detailed explications of significant portions of the text. I was not at all conspicuous for any proficiency in Hindi but I remember distinctly that the beloved Pushp Sahib lost no time in 'owning' and befriending me. I was at a loss to understand what made him pay me the attention I did not deserve. He taught 'crowds' of students, spoke untiringly and established

proper rapport with his class. To this day I remember how he enjoyed teaching Bachchan's Hindi poem '*Teer par kaise rukun main*' (How can I stop on the shore/when the waves today are inviting me to take the plunge)?

After I left the S.P. College and passed my B.A through the A.S. College, Srinagar, I virtually lost contact with Professor Pushp. Of course, now and then I heard some of my friends mention his contribution to academics in general and to the promotion of Hindi in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Luckily, after I joined the University of Kashmir as lecturer in English in 1970, during the ensuing two decades or so I got several opportunities of interacting periodically with Pushp Sahib at the seminars and conferences hosted by the University. That was how I revived my association with one of the favourite teachers of my college days. A 'gentle colossus' in the realm of letters, he not only impressed me with his knowledge but also with his loving concern for the well-being and professional success of whosoever had been his student. It did not take me long to feel his impact as a versatile scholar, proficient in several languages as he was and trained in linguistics (of which I have a smattering).

We sometimes met at social gatherings and occasionally on the roadside in the vicinity of his house at Gogjibagh, Srinagar; he would shake hands with me warmly (holding mine firmly) and start off at a brisk pace if he had some business on hand. Always full of bright ideas, as a conversationalist he often "out tongued" those he discussed things with him.

I remember having called on Pushp Sahib, in recent years, when he was living in a rented house at Vikaspuri, New Delhi. That was the first occasion for me to see how he behaved as a host in his home. How delighted he was when he saw me! He overwhelmed me with his kind hospitality. Belatedly though, I gave him a complimentary copy of my book (based on my doctoral research), which he received with 'visible' pleasure. He reciprocated by giving me complimentary copies of three latest reviews of his (published in standard journals)

including the one on '*Kaashur Sarmaayi*' by Fazil Kashmiri. All the three bear his signature dated 17-7-1993 (indicating the date on which we met); they are now my *prized possession*. On going through them, I noted, with envy, his critical acumen and his superb command of English.

Sometime later, I sent Pushp Sahib complimentary copies of my book of Kashmiri poems '*Darshun*' and my maternal grandfather's volume titled '*Keshav Prakash*'; the parcel was redirected to me because the addressee had shifted to Mayur Vihar, New Delhi. I then managed to send a copy of '*Darshun*' to Pushpji by hand through Prof. C.L. Sapru. I got a warm letter in response with very valued and perceptive comments on my performance; written in Kashmiri, it felicitated me in the words "*poshta chuva*" and also cautioned me thus : "The road to perfection is long!" Painstakingly, Pushp Sahib had listed for me the number he considered "*zevi peth heon layakh*" (worth mentioning). I preserved the letter as a 'relic'.

My final affectionate "encounter" with Professor Pushp took place at Pamposh Enclave, New Dehli, when I called on him at his son-in-law's house after I visited Bhagawan Gopinath Ji Ashram, on the occasion of his Mahajayanti in July this year. Pushp Sahib was on bed (because of his sickness). Though his doctor had advised him full rest, he talked to me on several topics for over an hour. I pointedly drew his attention to the proposed "felicitation" volume on him; during the course of our conversation, the question of compiling all that the professor had published in this or that journal naturally cropped up. He gave me some important names and references in his behalf. He further suggested that rather than some one attempted a profile of his, he himself should be interviewed regarding what he had done and published through all his literary career, and the material thus obtained sifted properly for inclusion in the volume proposed. Unfortunately, this has not been done (as far as I know).

On my return to Jammu, I obtained an article, titled "The Theatre in Jammu", written by Professor R.N. Shastri, the well-

known scholar of Jammu whom I respect and admire. Soon after, the death of a relative necessitated my visit to Delhi again and I talked to the late professor on telephone. Despite his sickness, he was very alert and articulate in his talk. In particular, he directed me to contact Professor Bhalla here and secure from him a photocopy of his (Pushp ji's) article titled 'Kashmir through the eyes of Hieuen Tsang' that had appeared in the inaugural issue of the journal 'Aina', published by the Govt. Degree College, Poonch during his tenure as its Principal. Bhalla Sahib could not trace the journal in question.

Pushp Sahib's article titled 'Henze' published in a recent issue of the *Koshur Samachar* convinces me that he was simply superb as a writer, a "many-splendoured" personality. And his Kashmiri poem titled 'Zindagi' that appeared for the second time in the October issue of the *Koshur Samachar*, is a marvellous piece, inimitable and creative in a high degree. I conclude by saying that Pushp Sahib's admirers, including his former colleagues and students, must immediately address themselves to the task of collecting and compiling all his scattered writings. It is a task that should have long back been taken in hand by the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (considering the Professor's great contribution to Kashmiri language and culture). Bringing out such a compilation, besides the commemorative volume that is on the anvil, would be a befitting memorial to the learned professor who is no more physically amidst us but dwells in our hearts.

Chapter 6

‘PUSHP’, THE FRAGRANT FLOWER*

T.N. DHAR ‘KUNDAN’

Mere mention of the name ‘Pushp’ brings back the cherished memories of my college days in mid-forties and the entire period of my association with him flashes through my mind. After passing the matriculation, as I entered S.P. College in Srinagar, I chose Sanskrit as one of the elective subjects and Hindi as the optional one. The teacher teaching these two subjects was none other than Prof. Pushp. A pleasing personality, with erudite scholarship and a great sense of humour, he captivated the hearts of the whole class which comprised both boys and girls. Sanskrit was my favourite subject and it was encouraging to find that Prof. Pushp was a teacher with a difference. He had originality in teaching, innovative methodology and capacity to bring the best out of the students. He never had to concentrate on weaker students and give less attention to a brighter one as is usual with most of the teachers. The uniform method adopted by him suited both with the result that all the students fared very well in the examinations. Sanskrit grammar was a nightmare for the students and the teaching was imparted through translation method. Yet Prof. Pushp employed this method in his own innovative way, involving the whole class, which made even grammar learning very interesting and absorbing. His teaching of Kalidasa and other great masters of Sanskrit was so

*This article was written when Prof. Pushp was alive.

enchanting that the scenes and episodes described would come alive before one's eyes. He would explain in depth the poetic verses and bring out the intrinsic beauty of these compositions. While explaining a word, he would throw light on a host of other words connected and derived from the same root. He would illustrate principles and rules with the help of not only popular couplets from the *Bhagwad Gita*, *Ramayana* etc; but also oft-repeated common *stotras* chanted in our homes, simultaneously ridiculing the faulty rendering and pronunciation that would play havoc with the actual meaning of the *shlokas*. His emphasis was on correct pronunciation and building a word by identifying the root and using prefixes and suffixes. It goes to his credit that he made learning the subject so interesting that most of us got very high marks in Sanskrit and I am sure that this was the case with batch after batch every year.

As regards Hindi, this being an optional subject, normally we would have taken it easy but again his teaching of Hindi also was so captivating that we learnt it with great interest and seriousness. He was particular that when we spoke in Hindi we also thought in it lest we should speak Hindi translated sub-consciously from Kashmiri, which often made a mockery of the language. To encourage original writing and to improve creativity among the students he led us to form *Hindi Sahitya Parishad* in the College. Under its auspices weekly meetings were held where we would read out our compositions both in prose and poetry. This would be followed by a lively discussion bringing out the good and bad of what was presented. I had the privilege of being the Secretary of this *Parishad* as also the editor of the Hindi section of the college magazine. Selected compositions read and discussed at these weekly meetings would be included in the college magazine. The patronage and guidance provided by Professor Sahib was a great source of inspiration with the result that the talented ones eventually became good writers and poets.

I remember vividly that one day in the class room I put a flower in the crack of the wooden black board and wrote the word Prof. before it with a chalk. When he entered the

class room and saw it, he was amused. But he advised me never to pluck a flower. Such is the tender heart that he possesses. He would not like to hurt even a plant for it has life and must be cared for.

Prof. Sahib, himself a voracious reader, would keep a close watch on the college library and make sure that the latest books of high standard, both fiction and nonfiction, were added to it. He would announce the titles of these books in the class and ask the students to borrow these books and read them to enrich their knowledge. He would discuss the subject matter of these books, the merits and demerits with selected students and thus inculcate the faculty of evaluation and criticism. It was always a treat to join him in such discussions and gain experience as to how a literary piece should be evaluated.

He was very popular with his students and was easily accessible to one and all, be it in the staff room or at his residence. I was, however, one of the privileged ones whom he loved from the core of his heart. I used to call on him regularly at his residence, first at Sathu Barbarshah, then at Karan Nagar and also at Gogji Bagh. I would bring with me the problems faced by me in preparing lessons and he would in no time help me solve these. He involved me in extra-curricular activities and that laid the foundation stone for the little literary acumen that I developed in later years. We would always look forward to the college excursions headed by him. These outings were not only a source of recreation but also educative and informative. Himself a vegetarian, he would ridicule non-vegetarians and narrate jokes at their expense.

Prof. Pushp is a master of so many languages. He is at ease writing in any one of these. Yet the delicate lyrics that he composes in Kashmiri and Hindi are par excellence. He combines in his writings, pure diction, musical words and simple language bordering on folklore.

After completing my studies in Kashmir, I joined the Indian Audit Department and had to leave the Valley for good. Prof. Pushp held various prestigious posts including those of the Principal of a College and the Director, Research

Department. Whenever I visited Kashmir on a holiday and Professor Sahib was in town, I would invariably call on him either at his house or in his office. He would receive me warmly with an open heart, listen to my latest compositions appreciatively and his face would glow like a mother seeing her child walk a few steps for the first time. He has selected some of my poems and got them included in the anthologies published by the Sahitya Academy, and J&K Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages. In 1967, when I represented Kashmiri on the National hook-up in multi lingual poetry recitation on the eve of the Republic Day, he was very pleased and sent me his blessings. Such is his heart full of love, affection and concern for his pupils.

Then came a period when there was a long break in our meetings or communication until one fine morning I came to know that his third son was going to marry the daughter of my next door neighbour at my Delhi residence. We met on the wedding day of his son and he held me in a tight and warm embrace. Ever since we met quite a few times.

After the turmoil which overtook our community in 1990, Pushpji also had to migrate to Delhi. Again I had a few pleasant occasions to meet him. He had not changed a bit. He wore the same old child-like smile, and was witty as ever, alert and full of knowledge. The same old warmth of his love touched my heart. He has the same old fragrance, bewitching and enchanting. True it is difficult to forget a good teacher but it is well nigh impossible to forget a teacher like Pushp Ji who combines in him a good teacher, a loving personality, an erudite scholar and an able sympathetic guide. Humility and compassion personified as he is, hundreds of his grateful students bow in reverence to him and pray for his long, healthy and eventful life.

His name is Prithvinath, master of the land. He may not be a master of any land but master of many a heart he is. His pen name '*Pushp*' the flower, is quite appropriate. It denotes in a large measure his qualities. He is *Satya*, *Shiva*, and *Sunder* - a fragrant flower. May his fragrance be eternal and immortal!

Chapter 7

HOMAGE FROM A PUPIL

PUSHPJI, MY GURU

Mrs. NIRMAL 'KUSUM' KACHRU

An unforgettable picture is etched in my memory : A boy, standing on the door of my home is giving something to my mother. He and my mother are talking.

Then it dawns on me that he is the boy who resides in my paternal uncle's house next door. The family members of my paternal uncle shower praises on this boy, whenever his name comes up : "He is a very diligent, noble boy. He is intensely fond of reading and learning."

He has come from an Anantnag village to complete his education in the city (Srinagar). He runs about from his residence to the market to fetch the things that my paternal aunt asks him to; and this boy never hesitates. There is not even a trace of irritation or resentment on his face.... ever smiling. Never says no to any household errands..... most of the time holding one or the other book in his hand. He is described as an ideal student to us, the other school going children.

This is the picture of my revered Guru, Shri Prithvi Nath 'Pushp', embedded in my mind.

To cut short my personal story, it was by 1943 that I was able to join S.P. College, Srinagar, in the post-matriculation class. At this time Pushpji taught Hindi and Sanskrit and I felt so happy to find him as my teacher there. Late Prof. Shrikanth

Toshkhani persuaded me to choose philosophy as one of my subjects. I had no interest in Sanskrit then. So I chose Hindi as my 'compulsory' (or was it optional) subject, and my teacher was Pushpji.

We were only three or four girl students in the Hindi class. Pushpji's teaching was like the flow of Vitasta—calm and continuous and vast in its magnitude!

Those days very few students offered Hindi as a subject. Urdu was medium of teaching then and I studied history and geography through Urdu medium. Pushpji was my Guru who introduced me to the soul of Hindi. And then I read many renowned Hindi writers like Premchand, Sudarshan and Jainendra. From my childhood to present day, Hindi-Urdu never seemed two separate languages to me. Those days, Hindi-Urdu were neither seen as communal languages nor were they overburdened by Sanskrit-Persian as today.

Pushpji had started a weekly literary society *Hindi Sahitya Parishad*, in the college. Students used to read their poems, short stories, articles etc. in this literary get-together, which generated lively discussions. I and many of my classmates actively participated in these activities. I eagerly waited for these weekly meetings, where I used to read my literary compositions—poems, short stories, essays etc. It goes without saying that Prof. Pushp was the moving spirit behind this society, a sort of a training school to prepare young writers. I remember at least one such student, Triloki Nath Dhar, who has become a well-known writer now and writes in Hindi, Kashmiri and English under the pen-name of 'Kundan'.

I vividly remember the day when Pushpji asked me to recite some selected lines of a famous Hindi poetess Subhadra Kumari Chauhan. These lines were from her famous poem "*Jhansi Ki Rani*" which had taken the Hindi world by storm in those days of Indian freedom struggle. I was excited, but more excited was my Guru Pushpji, who taught me in minutest detail the art of recitation—its nuances, stresses and the method of presentation. Pushpji's guidance and my recitation were duly

rewarded. I got the first prize and his disciple got two outstanding books as her reward: Prof. J.L. Kaul's *Kashmiri Lyrics* and a Hindi novel *Vidaa*.

A few selected stanzas of Shri Bhagwati Charan Varma's outstanding Hindi poem *Bhainsa Gadi*, were also recited by me. Dr. Karan Singh, known as Rajkumar Karan Singh those days, who was our classmate in S.P. College, was assigned a famous English poem for recitation, the opening lines of which were, "*Sceptre and crown must tumble down*."

I remember another occasion that is closely connected with my Guru—Pushpji. He gave five of us a topic, "Necessity of Fashion" for essay writing. A girl student from Delhi, in attire and dress so different from the rest of us, had through convincing logic proved the necessity of fashion; but the four of us, through usual cliches and stale arguments made fun of fashions. We were pretty sure that Pushpji would be very much pleased and appreciate our essays and would not like the Delhi girl's arguments. But we were terribly shocked when our Gururji with his usual wit and brilliant logic demolished our arguments and upheld the views of the former. And at the end of the reading session, the Delhi girl's essay was adjudged the best.

Many of my classfellows had offered Sanskrit as their elective subject which Pushpji taught. One of my close friends, Pitty Razdan, used to take me along to her class. The way Pushpji taught Sanskrit was fantastic. He would write each Sanskrit verse on the black-board and then explain its meaning and also its grammar. This fascinated me so much that I too offered Sanskrit as one of my subjects upto my post-graduation.

Pushpji by nature was a humble, cultured and a serious person. I vividly remember an incident of his humility and honesty. We lost our petromax lamp during Pushpji's wedding. After a few days he came with some cash to compensate for the loss. When my mother refused to accept the payment, Pushpji in his usual humble way insisted that my mother should accept the payment. She told him, "You are as good as my son. How can a mother accept such payment from her

son?" Pushpji's expressive eyes, full of welled-up emotions, spoke volumes.

Pushpji disliked plucking of flowers. "Flowers look beautiful where they bloom," said my Guruji to me many a time.

In Delhi, when I was serving as the Vice Principal of the Beni Prasad Jaipuria Senior Higher Secondary Girls School, a new homescience teacher joined our school in a leave vacancy. A few days later I came to know that she was the darling daughter of Pushpji. I was overwhelmed. I could not conceal my joy. I asked, "Did your parents call you by the pet name *Chhalni*"? Unbelievable astonishment was writ large on her face. She asked, "How do you know that?" I revealed, "Many many years ago you came to my home at Srinagar with your father Pushpji. You were a small, naughty, lovely child then. Your respectable father is my revered Guru!"

Even a respected teacher-scholar of Pushpji's exalted stature, who led many student generations of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh "from darkness to light", was not spared the torture of leading a refugee's life in his own country's capital—thanks to terrorism.

I always longed, to meet my Guru in Delhi, I was so lost in the humdrum of this callous city's life and my household chores that my wish remained an unfulfilled dream. And a painful void too!

Chapter 8

A TRIBUTE TO PROF. P.N. PUSHP

PRITHVI NATH LIDHOO

I was a student of S.P. College, Srinagar in 1944. Prof. Pushp was on the staff of the College. He was often seen wearing a black *achkan* (a collarless longish coat) with white *churidar payjama* and black Gandhi cap. He had amiable manners and would talk very politely with the students. So I had naturally developed some attraction for his charming personality and the beauty of his words, which he spoke to every one with a charming smile.

I was a student of Sanskrit with Prof. Govind Joo Razdan, but I cherished to be under the guidance of Prof. Pushp as the students being taught by him were all praise for him. I, therefore would often go to him and tell him my difficulties, being a villager with no proper guidance. He appreciated my approach towards studies, so he would guide me properly.

I appeared in M.A. Hindi of the Punjab University in 1951. We were only two candidates in this subject from Kashmir. Late Prof. Kashi Nath Dhar was already M.A. (Sanskrit) and Hons in Hindi.

I started writing a lot to improve my expression and vocabulary.

After putting in hard labour, writing different essays in Hindi, I wanted some expert guidance, so I approached Prof. Pushp at his Wazir Bagh residence on a Sunday. As soon as he saw me, he came downstairs, clad in a simple white dress. After I gave my introduction, he went through the essays and

short stories I had written. He was very glad and appreciated my endeavour and hard work, that I had put in to improve my expression in this subject, coming as I did from such a distant and educationally backward area of J&K State.

I also told him all my difficulties in learning this language and that too at the cost of my health. I was a school teacher and to earn extra money I had to attend tuition work also. It was only during night that I could write and compose in Hindi.

I appeared in M.A. again in 1956 from S.D. College, Ambala Cantt., under the guidance and care of Dr. Samsar Chand, Head of the Deptt, and was declared successful. I would later often meet Prof. P.N. Pushp who instructed me to write short stories depicting Kashmiri culture after meeting old men and women folk in villages, towns and cities. This would help me to know the old cultural heritage of Kashmir. I followed his advice in letter and spirit and started writing accordingly.

By this time Prof. Pushp was promoted as Assistant Director Libraries.

I went to congratulate Prof. Pushp in his office. He reciprocated my greetings and was very glad to see me as a Hindi scholar.

As I recollect all this I feel very sad that such a great soul had to depart from the world as a migrant. All India Radio announced in its Kashmiri bulletin broadcast from New Delhi the news of his untimely death on 19th September, 1996, plunging his numerous admirers into sorrow. The Kashmir Radio, Srinagar remorsefully announced this news at 7.30 P.M. on the same day—i.e. 19th September, 1996.

Prof. Pushp was a teacher par-excellence. I have still to see or hear of a teacher like him. He always laid stress on the character building. Eminent scholars, poets and writers have already paid tributes on his death both at Delhi and Jammu. I also pay my respectful homage to the departed soul. May his soul live in peace !

Chapter 9

PROF. PUSHP—A GREAT CONVERSATIONIST*

M.L. RAINA (Tarwala)

I had heard a lot about Professor P N Pushp's talent in all-round education and culture. I felt I could meet him and commune with him about different spheres of life. This inherent wish brought me near him one day, though very late. Even this delayed chance meeting became a blessing in disguise. I am making the best of my time in getting awareness of many things.

Linguistics is his special subject of study and that too in many languages such as Pali, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Persian (with a smattering of Arabic), Bengali and Marathi. Wit and humour have their rightful place in his parlance. We have been spending pleasant evenings for the past one month or so. He has not been keeping well for some time. I make my contribution to keep him cheerful by discussing varied topics with him ranging from the pyramids of Egypt, Dara Shikoh's library at Pari Mahal near Nishat Bagh in Srinagar, the Shankracharya Mandir (Jyeshtha-Rudra), Zeethyar (Jyesteshwar), performance of marriages in different communities, Vishnu Paad (Kaunsar Naag), Shiva-Shakti, and so on.

We talk of destiny, predestination and endeavour; ritual, religion and spirituality, fetish, fad and prejudice, societal traditions, shams and chauvinism and so on. About destiny he

**This article was written when Prof. Pushp was alive.*

says, "What is happening and will go on happening is predicament; what happens ultimately is destiny. It would, therefore, be safer to start with endeavour and not get obsessed with the dread of destiny." In this context he refers to two traditional concepts of '*prarabdha*' and '*pralabdha*'.

He does not like inflicting or imposing his view on others but deems it a privilege to share his perspective with those who are interested. Though physically weak, he is mentally alert, intellectually wide awake and spiritually receptive. He, in fact, views spirituality as "awareness of the self (*chetana*—consciousness)".

Among many outstanding personalities, Swami Vivekananda has fascinated him most. He often quotes him aptly to substantiate his own views. For instance :

1. "My dear young friends, it is good to be born in a church, but it is silly to die there."
2. "Man does not travel from error to truth but from a truth that is lower to a truth that is higher"

He generally has a ready, satisfactory and simple explanation for a number of things. He is far away from communal stress and strain. He bears his present state of health with a cheerful attitude of life.

We have been having regular chats in the form of questions and answers. He is a few years younger to me in age, but is quite talented as can be clear from the following :

My remark : बुजुर्गी ब अक्ल अस्त न ब साल ।

His response : It could also be :

बुजुर्गी ब अक्ल अस्त व ब साल ।

My remark : मन तुरा हाजी बिगोयं तू मरा हाजी बिगो

His parody : Now it has become :

मन तुरा हाजी बिगूयं तू मरा पाजी मगू

His pithy comments often are amusing. Talking of missing a bus, for instance, he said :

बस पर बस चले तो बस; नहीं तो बस जी बस, बेबस!

Somebody bragged : "I have no tensions",

Pat came his comment : "If you say you have no *tension*, you have pretension."

Thus we have been chatting.

ON HIS WRITINGS

Chapter 10

PROF. PUSHP AND THE FORTNIGHTLY 'KASHMIR'

S.N. DHAR

Prof. P.N. Pushp, who had specialised in Kashmir's cultural heritage, contributed about a dozen articles to the Fortnightly '*Kashmir*' during 1951-54.

The topics covered by him include :

1. Lal Ded, May 1951.
2. The Poetry of Mahjoor, May 16, 1951.
3. The Poetry of Parmanand, March 1951 and April 1951.
4. The Poetry of Nadim, July 16, and July 23, 1951.
5. The Poetry of Azad, August 1, 1951.
6. The Poetry of Maqbool Kralawari, Sep. and Nov. 1951.
7. The Poetry of Arif, Oct. 16, 1951.
8. The Poetry of Masterji, Dec. 10, 1951.
9. The Poetry of Asi, Sep. 16, 1952.
10. Kashmir's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature,
Nov. 1, 1952.

These are veritable benchmarks in the popularisation of Kashmiri poetry. Till then Mahjoor and Lal Ded alone had been known via the English medium outside the State. It was for the first time that other poets of Kashmir were presented in the English language to countrywide readership.

In fact, some of them, like Maqbool Kralawari, Arif, Nadim and Asi were presented for the first time. But there were pilferers who spoiled the literary scene. Dr Kaumudi in her book *Kashmir's Cultural Heritage*, used much of Prof. Pushp's material without making a due mention. (Likewise, she shamelessly lifted material from Shri Somnath Dhar's *Jammu and Kashmir Folklore*). Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz wrote a booklet on *Azad, the Poet of Humanism*, drawing on the material of Prof. Pushp, but did not acknowledge it.

In "Lal Ded : A Study" (*Kashmir*, May 1951), Prof Pushp expatiated on Lalleshwari or Lal, who was a "Saint Yogini"--a mystic of the Kashmir School of Shaivism. Her poetry was "saturated with the idea of the 'Supreme', immanent in and yet transcending everything". She well and truly diagnosed the "disease of existence". It was her "lower self--the *desire*--that was responsible for this sorry state of affairs". Her evolution of spiritual regeneration is narrated as to how she "mastered the six seats of energies--and attained freedom from *desire*" and that "led to the realization of the ultimate truth". A sort of a spiritual biography.

In "The Poetry of Mahjoor" (*Kashmir*, May 16, 1951), Prof. Pushp writes glowingly on Kashmir's great poet of the modern era. Mahjoor sang for the people--"the freedom-loving millions who beat the barbarous *Qabailis* back". He greeted the 'New Age' when India became independent in 1947.

Mahjoor expressed the people's jubilation in stirring verse. He hoped to see his prophecy fulfilled :

*Kashmir alone shall awaken
the East from the (long, long) slumber.*

On "Poetry of Parmanand", Prof. Pushp wrote in two parts (*Kashmir*, March 1951 and April 1951 issues). Out of "the depth of his injured heart", Parmanand sang:

*"O diadem-decked,
Ferry me across somehow, or else shall
I sink in the world-ocean."*

Parmanand was "convinced of the futility of Yoga bereft of genuine devotion and faith". What was really needed was the real form of the *Sahaja*--the Inborn Truth".

To Parmanand, the *Rasa-Lila* of life was "incomplete until man dives deep into the ocean of joy--and soaks the personality in the spirit."

The critique on "The Poetry of Nadim" by Prof. Pushp appeared in *Kashmir*, July 16, 1951. He gave representative quotes from Nadim, written in 1947 after the *Qabaili* raid, how he along with Arif, Asi and Roshan, portrayed "the avalanche of the people's resistance against the raiders". Nadim experimented with free verse, and utilized the folk technique in writing a few labour-chants", thus wrote Prof. Pushp in *Kashmir*, July 16, 1952. Nadim supported radical, agrarian (land to the tiller) reforms. His *Vavan-Vonnam* ("The Wind has Spoken to Me") is "a strong condemnation of all those reactionaries who are trying to exploit the Kashmir issue".

In "The Poetry of Azad," Prof. Pushp (*Kashmir*, August 1, 1951) observed that "his whole poetry was a mighty crusade against religious fanaticism, communal prejudices and national fads". Azad "addressed himself to the common man beguiling whom the *ka'aba* and the temple, the clumsy cheats, have won the game". Azad boldly invited the common man to "shake off the trammels of religion".

Azad, adds Pushp Sahib, had lived in extreme penury. He passed away on April 4, 1948. "Had he lived a few years more, his poetry would have become richer in content and finer in form", sums up Prof. Pushp. "But even as it is, its values inspire New Kashmir".

Pushp specially brought out the poetic significance of Azad's *Daryav* (River) as the metaphor of vigorous flux. On "The Poetry of Maqbul Kralawari", Prof P.N. Pushp pointed out (*Kashmir*, Sep., 1951 and Nov. 1951) that "he held a prominent place amongst the 19th century Kashmiri poets". He took the peasant community to task in his *Grist Nama*, how they kowtowed to the revenue officials. He depicted the

extreme penury of the peasant in moving verse. He depicted the peasants officiously rushing to receive the *Sazawal*, the petty official, with pretended eclat.

Writing on "The Poetry of Arif", (*Kashmir*, Oct. 16, 1951), Prof. Pushp observes that Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg, better known as Mirza Arif, fought against social dispensations. He was inspired by the Quit Kashmir movement in 1946 and "championed the cause of social revolution" of which he had sung earlier.

He wrote on Gandhiji's visit to Kashmir (in 1946) and paid him a sad, glowing tribute when he was assassinated:

*"Who has pulled the flower to pieces?
Who was it that lay in ambush
Like the fire of jealousy?"*

Arif covered the whole period of transition from monarchy to New Kashmir, in its various aspects.

A critique by Prof. P.N. Pushp ("The Poetry of Masterji") appeared in *Kashmir*, in Dec. 1, 1951. He expatiated on how Masterji "set out in search of the Eternal" and by his conviction "gained strength that the fundamental truth resides in Love alone".

After giving representative quotes from Masterji's poems, Pushp Sahib commented :

"In brief, Masterji, like Tagore and Gandhi, wants us to strive for a new world—a better, lovelier and a happier world. He is a veritable mystic of robust optimism". Prof. Pushp concluded, "Master Zinda Kaul, more than any other poet of today, has given to the Kashmiri verse grace and beauty of form".

On "The Poetry of Asi" in *Kashmir* Sep. 16, 1952, he said that "Asi was a people's poet"; who, though a milkman by birth, managed to study Hafiz and Sadi (in Persian)—and derived his inspiration from Mahjoor. A telling quote is given from his repertoire, expressing the "blessings of poverty". Asi, holds Prof Pushp, advocated a healthy synthesis between

patriotic feelings and humanism—"and this he found in Gandhiji whom he adored".

When Gandhiji was assassinated, Asi expressed his shock:

*"Alas : he strove to resuscitate a garden in ruins,
And lost his life while lying low".*

In "Kashmir's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature", (*Kashmir*, Nov. 1, 1952), Prof. Pushp covered the contribution under three main heads: the folk-tale, history as poetic narration and satire as a vigorous genre of poetic articulation. Besides, he pinpointed the brilliance of the lyric and the epic. Kalhana "tells us of a dozen distinguished kings of Kashmir who made a mark in the domain of poetry". Poets flourished during the reign of Avantivarman.

"Kashmir made the most substantial contribution to Sanskrit verse" in the 11th and 12th centuries. Kshemendra (990-1065 A.D.) was "almost as versatile a genius as his predecessor, the celebrated Abhinavaguptacharya".

Pushp's prose is limp, economic, without frills and paddings. He has no superfluous words to write.

Chapter 11

DOWN THE MEMORY LANE : PROF. PUSHP AND HINDI IN KASHMIR

VIR VISHVESHWAR

A, Hindi wave swept Srinagar during the mid-'30s, and early 40s. It was an awakening sequel to the famous 'Roti agitation' in Kashmir. Pushp and Hindi are synonymous, in a way, when we talk about 'Hindi in Kashmir'. His zest for Hindi and zeal for giving it a place of privilege in Kashmir has been admirable, particularly when Persian and Urdu were in vogue there. Persianised Urdu was the court language in the State. Even Kashmiri Pandits' annual *Panchangs* used to be published in the Persian script. Correspondence and communications in our ceremonies, rituals and '*hyot dyot*' too were usually in Persianised Urdu. This situation prompted youth in the State to lead a crusade for propagation of Hindi amongst the Hindu gentry in J&K. Pushpji was in the forefront. The movement got a fillip when he became a lecturer in Hindi and Sanskrit in S.P. College, Srinagar and later in P.W. College Jammu. I have been associated with him in the campaign in Kashmir almost right from the beginning.

My first meeting with Shri Prithvi Nath Bhatt, '*Pushp*' was in early '30s at Arya Samaj Nagrik Bhawan then located at Kharyar, Habbakadal. After the normal '*satsang*', he read his versified Hindi translation of the six *Shiva Sankalpa* Yajurvedic '*richas*' in lucid Hindi, which fascinated me. This first meeting was intimate and impressive. He expressed that he had heard about me and wanted to meet me. We later met

in Sri Pratap College, Srinagar where he was three years senior to me. Though distantly related to him from his in-laws side, we were closer to each other because of our common tutor Professor J L Kaul (Talib) who was the then Head of the Deptt. of Hindi in S.P. College. Pushpji was then the editor of the Hindi section of '*Pratap*' the college magazine. This was my another fascination for him and his activities relating to Hindi in the college. I later took over the editorship of the Hindi, Kashmiri and Urdu sections of the '*Pratap*' from 1937 to 1940. I would admit the motivation was his.

I distinctly remember the '*Kumbh Mela*' at Shadipur Srinagar in mid '30s where we distributed the first Hindi handout of its kind in Kashmir. The thronging Hindu crowds at '*Dashahara*', the '*Kumbh*' fair motivated Pushpji to draft an appeal on behalf of *matri bhasha* Hindi entitling it as *Hindi ki Pukaar* in order to focus the pilgrims' attention on Hindi and its importance in the State.

Campaign for popularising Hindi gained its momentum in the Valley from early 40's. *Chandrodaya* and *Mahabir*, the Hindi weeklies were pioneers in the field. Pushpji edited the *Chandrodaya* while *Mahabir* was edited by Sri Dinanath (Kachroo) Deen and me. Pushpji and I both contributed to the weeklies regularly. The untimely demise of Smt. Pursharthavati, the budding poetess, moved Pushp. She was the daughter of the veteran Arya Samajist Lala Chiranjit Lal of Hazooribagh and wife of the celebrated Hindi writer Chandragupta Vidyalankaar. Pushp wrote his first critical appreciation '*Antarvedania*' reviewing Pursharthavati's poems. The essay was published in 11th to 25th June, 1940 weekly editions of the *Mahabir*. This to my mind was the beginning of his critical appreciation of Hindi poems. These weeklies enthused Hindi loving young active workers and helped their coordination to popularise Hindi. They canvassed from door to door requesting the Hindu gentry to correspond in Hindi. It was stressed that the beginning be made by writing addresses in Devanagri Hindi on their mailing letters.

Soon after Pushpji was posted to Jammu where he made the Hindi Department a lever for popularising Hindi, organising meetings, seminars, debates, and symposiums etc. in his college.

Meanwhile I started and established Hindi Sahitya Parishad with its office at Malayar, Habbakadal. The Parishad won recognition by Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag (Allahabad), Nagri Pracharini Sabha, (Varanasi) Kashi, and Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti, Wardha, in a short span of six months. Pandit Amar Nath Kak was elected as President of the Parishad in 1941. The campaign gained the desired momentum. Hindi classes were organized at various centres with main branches at the Parishad office, Kathleshwar and at the *Mahabir* office. Free literature and stationery were distributed among the boys and the girls who were coached and prepared for *Parichaya* and *Kovid* preliminary Hindi examinations introduced by Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad. Parishad was affiliated to the Sammelan's Zonal Headquarters at Abohar, Firozpur Distt. (Punjab) for these examinations. Many of the examinees won prizes from the Sahitya Sammelan. I was in continued contact with Pushpji seeking his views in the venture.

The span of 60 years of the association with Pushpji has been too long to discuss his multidimensional efforts in other fields as Principal, Asstt. Director Research and Publications (J&K), Director Libraries, Museums and Archives (J&K) besides his services to the cause of Hindi and Kashmiri languages and literature; his valuable contribution to the Sahitya Akademy and various Hindi associations in India. I have listed only few selective incidents sticking to my memory—the incidents of his love and work for Hindi. His dedication has won him appreciation and awards from various institutions, some of which are as under:-

- J&K Cultural Forum - 1973
- Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Nagpur - 1975
- Hindi Writers' Union, Kerala and U.P.
- Hindi Sansthan, Lucknow - 1987

My spell of 30 years' (1949-1979) of Army service caused a slight gap in our associated activities for Hindi but we were in touch alright. I kept a tag on his achievements and Hindi activities. His love has been abounding throughout. I valued him as my close friend and nourished appreciation for him as a pioneer in Hindi campaign in Jammu and Kashmir.

Chapter 12

PROF. PUSHP AS A LEXICOGRAPHER

MOTI LAL SAQI

Prof. P.N. Pushp is no more. He was a man of many hues and colours. He was like a fragrant flower who perfumed his surroundings with his deep scholarship and ever-smiling presence. He was an institution in his own right. I feel that we have lost a bridge which joined our past with present. There is no gain in saying that we have hardly a man of his stature amongst us now.

I knew Pushp Sahib for a long long time, perhaps for more than forty years. I had the privilege to work with him for almost twenty years or so—first while working on the staff of *Kashmiri-Kashmiri Dictionary* and then as in-charge *Encyclopaedia Kashmiriana*.

Pushp Sahib was associated with the *Kashmiri-Kashmiri Dictionary* till its completion. While other members of the editorial board were removed and inducted, Pushp Sahib remained there as the anchor of the project. He was the only member of the editorial board who took the work very seriously and went through all the entries of this lexicon with zeal and zest. While working with him I came to the conclusion that he was more concerned with the completion of the work and never bothered about remuneration. Work for him was as good as worship.

Pushp Sahib was associated with *Encyclopaedia Kashmiriana* from its very inception. He worked as editorial consultant of this project for the first two volumes which stand published. We would have benefited from his consultancy for the third volume had he been available in Jammu.

Pushp Sahib was a man of punctual habits all through. While compiling and editing the encyclopaedia he was the only editorial consultant who proved his worth and metal while others did less rather nothing but posed more.

Pushp Sahib would go through every word of an entry and record his impressions on the margin here and there. He would suggest the reconstruction of sentences so as to make the text more coherent and intelligible. He would always suggest and would never try to impose like a true scholar. His absence from the editorial consultancy was very much felt by me when I came in contact with the consultants of the third volume, who had no capacity to add to the worth of the volume. At certain junctures they curtailed the entries without assigning any reason and the curtailment lessened the very essence of the entries. That was not the case with Pushp Sahib. In fact I missed him very much. As a matter of fact one recognises the worth of a scholar then and then alone when mediocres try to make their presence felt.

Master of Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and English Pushp Sahib was versed in Bengali, Persian, Dogri and Punjabi also. He wrote simultaneously in four languages i.e. Kashmiri, Hindi, Urdu and English.

While compiling *Gojri-Gojri Dictionary*, Pushp was included in its editorial board to give it a proper direction.

Pushp Sahib's death is the death of an epoch. He will be always remembered as an erudite scholar.

I salute, with due humility, this luminary of all times to come.

Pushp Sahib must have departed with pangs of pain. Exodus deprived him of all that which he had accumulated in his life, not his property alone which in itself was a great loss, but the treasure of books, manuscripts, rare paintings etc. He cherished, loved and valued these things but was dispossessed of all this for no fault on his part.

14th Century was repeated at the fag end of 20th Century and valuable treasures has gone out of our hands, which cannot be redeemed.

CHAPTER I
A QUEST IN CULTURE
ANCIENT EGYPT

PART II

ARCHEOLOGY

PART II
ARCHAEOLOGY

Chapter 1

A QUEST IN CULT HISTORICITY OF ANCIENT KASHMIR

P. KACHROO

And

RENUKA KACHROO

“Doubtless the antiquity of the human race is much greater than is usually assumed by those whose values of the past are still regulated by mediaeval system of chronology”—

Baldwin: *Ancient America*.

INTRODUCTION

History of Kashmir is as old as man himself. Its varied topography, salubrious climate, abundant variety of fauna and flora, etc., have ever made it a welcome home and attracted the Central Asian tribes, and the later-day Muslim invaders. It continues to attract a student of humanities and nature alike. It is rightly a centre of human culture and knowledge. Its population was wholly Brahmin with the Buddhist conversions lasting to ca. AD 638. It was in and after AD 1314 that, through coercion and torture etc., Zulfiqar Khan alias Dulchu converted most of them to Islam. Later, the ruthless conversion occurred at the hands of Rengan Shah (AD 1323), Sikander (the Iconoclast), Azad Khan, Madad Khan and others. It is rightly said that “geography is the foundation of all historical knowledge, and the history of any nation is greatly shaped by its geography” (Singh 1965). This is true of Kashmir as well.

One unfortunate aspect of ancient India was the lack of enthusiasm in chronicling the history of its people and rulers as well as the fall of principalities/kingdoms. However, Kashmir is fortunate in the indigenous history of its kings narrated by Kalhana in the *Rajatrangini*. However, historical literature is available and provides an insight into ancient times. The indigenous sources of ancient times include archaeological and literary sources of Brahmannical, Buddhist, and Jain history.

Neolithic Kashmir

History has no record of what actually happened to the Neolithic man. But the "circumstantial-evidence that presents itself is that from a nucleus in Central Asia there could have been a two-fold migration, one to southwest (thence to Kashmir) and one northeast (China, Manchuria, Siberia). In Central Asia a form of neolithic culture is revealed at Ammu Darya and West Kazakhstan" (Mongait, 1929). In fact Dikshit (1982) has also stated that the "entry to Kashmir was through Gilgit and Sarhand, then along the foothills of Kun Lun ranges". "*But did Neolithic Man trod these routes to Kashmir?*" I have no 100 per cent proof, yet faith that he did come thence!" (cf. Kachroo 1995, italics mine).

It is agreed that human population in Asia ranged from 10,000 to 35,000 years ago, and that the population movements were severely restricted to Eastern Europe, the Tibetan plateau and the diagonal mountain chains of Central Asia. The narrow corridors not covered by glaciers and ice provided temporary routes of migration. Thus, the glaciated regions in the western Asia and the Himalaya reveal poor historical sites (Kennedy 1948). However, climatic fluctuations largely determined distributional patterns of human settlements. The following points are pertinent :

1. Pleistocene tools in Kashmir (Sankalia 1963).
2. Intermontane penetration of technologies may have been possible (Joshi *et al* 1974).

3. Relics of Old Stone Age discovered at northern India as an area of unusual promise for our knowledge of early man (in India) Sahni (1936).
4. Early human activity in Rawalpindi, Pampore, Kargil are revealing. (Hawkes *et al* 1934).
5. Interglacial man about the same stage of development as Neanderthal in Europe and Peking Man in the Far East flourished in the plains of Northern Punjab, shores of Kashmir lake and just across the great Himalayan range (Sahni 1936).
6. Evidence that early Man (Stone Age) lived in Pahlgam³ on the banks of the Lidder (at 3500 m) during the first interglacial period or during the second glacial period dated by Sankalia 1977 to ca 500,000 years ago (cf. Kachroo 1995).

The stone Age is routinely divided into two as follows:

- 1) Old Stone Age : Palaeolithic (500,000 to 10,000 BC)— Palaeolithic people were nomads who moved in search of food.
- 2) New Stone Age : Neolithic 10,000 BC to 3500 BC
Neolithic farmers domesticated and tamed wild animals (e.g. sheep, goat, dog).

Simple farming settlements grew into large cities by the end of ca. 3500 BC in most parts of the world.

By the beginning of the 6th millenium BC, prehistoric people of Central Asia entered into final stages of the Stone Age. It is believed that at this time agricultural societies appeared in South Turkemenistan, and animal husbandry was widely distributed in Asia (Kanov 1982).

The Neolithic period in India commenced ca. 2500 BC and continued to 1000 BC (Sharma 1984)⁴. Kanov concluded that Neolithic "is a period in which the ethnic basis of society emerged". He further stated that "ethnic groups in Central Asia

developed further in more complicated conditions and contacts, and the Bronze Age changed considerably”.

“The Neolithic people settled down in Kashmir valley around the middle of the third millenium BC (Sharma 1986). However, the neolithic culture in Kashmir Valley as revealed by Burzhom, Semthan and Gofkral (nine sites known) may be as old as 2470 BC as shown by the radiocarbon dating (Sharma 1986). The earlier evidence of agriculture so far discovered in India is at Burzhom (Vishnu Mitre 1974).

The Iron Age in India is ca. 1000 BC, and ended ca. 450 BC. The advent of the Aryans into India is believed to date from early Iron Age (Vishnu Mitre 1975). It is held that Neolithic in Kashmir extended to about 1500 BC (Agrawal and Kusumgar 1966), the time when Aryans are believed to have invaded Northern India.

Dikshit (1982) discussed the extra-territorial affinities of Kashmir neolithic culture which lie with those of east Asia (ranging from China to Siberia !)⁵. There appears to have been a succession of stone age industries going back to Paleolithic times. Even the Neolithic culture shows distinct signs of evolution, spatial differentiation and clear technological affinities with the preceding Stone Age cultures (Pant *et al* 1982)⁶.

The Neolithic people “excavated and built different types of houses/huts with the floor plastered with red ochre paste to ward off white ants. They had contact with alien elements (probably Harappans) around 1600 to 1700 BC....there is indication of such human activities as hatching, butchering, skinning, dismembering, etc. (Sharma 1986).

“Except for writing, of which we have no evidence so far, the early Kashmiris of Neolithic culture had everything essential for living a comfortable life (ca. 4000 years ago). They wore clothes of skins and probably woven and pressed wool...may be the same as worn by Central Asian people” (Sankalia 1 c);⁷ and established contact with Iran as well as Central Asia “though sporadic but throughout historical times”.

They had to begin with subsistence pattern of life style but the inhabitants of the aceramic stage may have started cultivation. At a later stage animals like sheep, goat and cattle were domesticated (Singh 1986). The earliest form of representational art concerned hunting as depicted on a stone slab (Shali 1986). It may be mentioned here that Bhan (1986) discussed at length the artistic heritage of the neolithic, and considered the terracota tiles as old as belonging to Neolithic period. He concluded, "who were these people with such artistic ideals and wherefrom they came is a forgotten link...tempted to connect them with some tribe of Central Asia who probably belonged to the Parthian ethnic group...who might have settled in the valley during first period/second century BC".

In fact, Shali (1986) stated that definite agricultural practices were followed in the Neolithic period (see Shali for details). In other words, Kashmir enjoyed a wholesome pastoral society and culture, and perhaps a peaceful existence till their freedom was usurped by the invading tribes of the Aryans from the north or northwest !

The Aryans

The Aryans were invaders who are believed to have arrived in India in ca. 1500 BC ? There is no written document nor any authentic archaeological evidence to this except for comparative philology (Burrow 1975). However it is agreed that they were settled in Central Asian region^{8,9}. It may be noted here that every race of Central Asia found its way to India (Basham 1975). Now-a-days the Caucasoid type is chiefly to be found in NWFP (Pakistan), Kashmir, Punjab; but even here one rarely meets the pure or nearly pure specimens (Basham l.c.).

*The Rgveda*¹⁰ is the repository of information about the Aryan invasion in India and early history. "The culture which we find in Rgveda was not developed in India, but in most essentials imported already from outside" (Burrow l.c.).

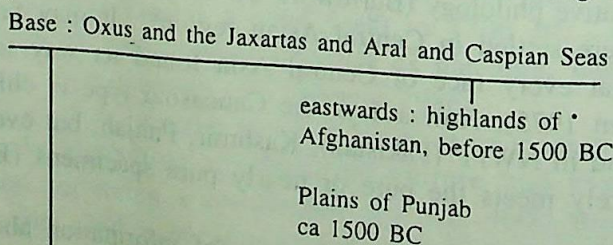
There are three parameters which determine the home of the Aryans as follows :

- (1) climate : three seasons, winter, summer and spring. Winter was followed by snowfall;
- (2) flora¹¹ and fauna : willow, birch; sheep, cow, horse¹², swan and goose; and
- (3) physiographical : crossing of rivers, mountains, valleys.

These point to Central Asian region, the main source being Vedic (and Iranian *Zenda*) literature (Singh 1965). Was it invasion or migration to India;¹³ at least in Kashmir it was invasion.

These invaders called themselves Arya and the permanent tribes (resident) in NW India variously as *Dasa*, *Mleecha* and *Nisada*. The early Aryans were divided into three groups: warriors, priests and commoners. They considered themselves as a noble tribe and the local tribes as their slaves. They had frequent struggles to subjugate these tribes and usurp their land. These tribes are considered to have been the origin of the Indus Valley civilization which preceded the Vedic period¹⁴. Even after subjugating the northern plains of India the Aryans had still to fight the local tribes between 1000-700 BC. Thereafter, the Aryan chiefs, who proved more successful, established independent kingdoms.

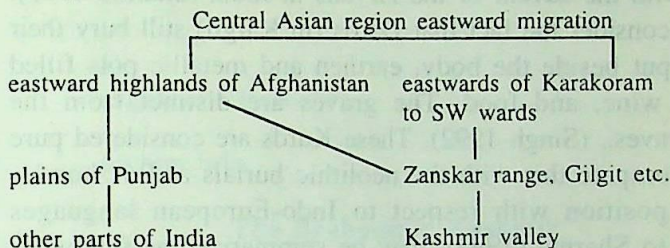
The Aryans came to NW India in a succession of migrations from outside India. From their home in Central Asian region some western scholars chart their migration as follows:



(Fig. 1)

Iran in mid 9th century BC but not earlier than 1000 BC, called their home as *aryanam vaejs*

We believe that from the Central Asian region the migration could have been as follows :



(Fig. 2)

The vedic language was Sanskrit, which is one of the Indo-European languages. Some believe it originated in Europe.

See below :

Primitive Aryans

not further east than the Volga and Urals

Influenced Finno-Ugrian

3rd millinium BC still members of original
Indo-European community, language a dialect
of Indo-European

Indo-Iranian, close relationship to
Balt, Slavonic group¹⁵

Shifted main centre towards Central Asia
beginning of 2nd millenium BC.

Aryan a separate community and separate
language

Incidentally, the practice of cremation is also associated with the Indo-Europeans. It was certainly typical of India and also prevailed in Lithuania in the Doneta area in the lower Volga area in 2000-1800 BC; in the Danube basin in Hungary around 1500 BC; in Italy during 1300-1100 BC; and also in Greece. Whether the pre-Aryans living in India practised

cremation is doubtful. The post-cremation burials found in Harappa and Mohanjodaro seem to be late-Harappan, and coincide with the advent of the Aryans in India (Sharma 1993). However, consider the fact that Dards (in Kargil) still bury their dead and put beside the body, earthen and metallic pots filled with fine wine, and food. The graves are distinct from the Muslim graves.. (Singh 1992). These Kurds are considered pure Aryans. Compare this with the neolithic burials at Burzhom!

The position with respect to Indo-European languages according to Sharma (1993), may be summarized as follows:

Indo-European Languages

Earliest inscrional evidence in Anatolia ca 1900 BC



three varieties including Hittite, first half second millenium BC



belong to westernn variety of Indo-European



also in Mycenaean inscriptions¹⁶
ca 1600 BC in Greece

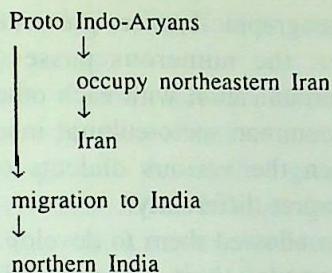


Iraq 1600 BC Kassite inscriptions mention terms closer to Surya, Maruti and Vayu.

Mitani inscriptions in north Syria 1400 BC or even earlier; mention Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Nasatya etc., text on horse training in Hittite language, full of Indo-Aryan words for numerals.¹⁷

Both India and Iran inherited fire worship and cult of *Soma*, and shared a common mythology. Both shared a common culture going back to the Central Asian homeland. How long this lasted is not decidedly known.

On linguistic basis, the Aryans of the Near-East have affinity with the Indo-Aryan branch whose "habitat was the Russian and Central Asian steppe." They share most of the Vedic gods in contrast to the Iranians who share only Nitra with them (see below also):



The Brahmanic Kashmir

The Aryan invasion into Kashmir appears to have followed the same route as that followed by the Neolithic man. From the Central Asian region the tribes entered through one of the following routes:

- 1) through Khyber Pass and Bolan Pass (Fig. 1) ; and
- 2) a few groups entered and spread into the territory south and southeast of Karakoram and the adjacent ranges (Fig. 2)¹⁸.

Here we may mention the position with respect to Kargil valley to whose northwest stretch the Deosai mountains all the way to Gilgit and Hunza valleys. On its north, lie the Zaskar ranges which extend southwards to Himachal to form a part of the great barrier of mountain ranges that separates India from Tibet; and Kashmir from the plains of India !

Migrating from their original home the tribes who settled in Kargil area under harsher conditions of climate do not appear to have moved southwards or anywhere. This has been the position with all the valleys lying in this region including Kashmir Valley; and this enabled them to preserve their individuality to the present day. The Kargilians are definitely Aryans as they do not appear to "have any Mongoleoid features" (Singh 1994).

The tribes that entered through the route 2 mentioned above were soon dispersed in the mountain valleys. The salubrious climate and vast pastures, a welcome sign for them

to settle down. Further, the geographic barriers prevented their further migration. However, the numerous passes in the mountain ranges allowed communication with each other. This resulted in maintaining their common socio-cultural inheritance as well as the links between the various dialects of their language; which now we interpret differently.

This geographic isolation allowed them to develop certain characteristic traits. For example, their principle of social organisation remained the *Varnashrama* which divided the mankind into just two classes : the Aryas and the *Dasyus*. The fact, that the Aryans in Kashmir are all Brahmins was due to total elimination of the local tribes. It is well known that the Aryans were hostile to the local tribes and brought about their physical elimination; those that survived fled to the mountains. The ethnic unity, common language, religion and way of life kept the Aryans close to one another. Still many local traditions and influences prevalent before the advent of the Aryans were owned by the invaders, and these formed the foundation of the future Hindu religion in Kashmir as well as in India. (It may be mentioned here that the majority of the present day Muslims are Brahmins in blood and behaviour).

Incidentally the continued occupation during Pleistocene in the neighbouring area of the Indus may be explained on the same premise of migration of man following the same routes thousands of years ago. The presence of a 'greater Kashmir' may be hidden in some of the unapproachable valleys !

Most of the early Aryan settlements in Kashmir were of wood, mud and stone; not much has remained for the archaeologists to record. But in the protohistorical period cave and pit dwellers did thrive.

It may be recalled here that the Neolithic settlements were situated on the high *Karewa* tops and we have no information of any settlements on the valley floor; and it is only with the appearance of the Kushans in the later half of the first century that events become recognisable. It is true that the Indo-Greeks did rule over greater part of the NW India and that their coins

have been also found in Kashmir; yet we know little of Kashmir proper.

Here we may refer to *Nilmatpurana*, according to which Kashmir was uninhabited as it was a large lake, Satisara. We need not go into the mythological details yet we have reason to believe that tribes inhabited the region, call them *nagas*, *pischachas*, etc. Like any invader, the Aryans considered them as brutes. Consider here that there have been many rulers of the Naga family, nine of which were conquered by Samudragupta in the fourth century A.D. The famous ruling family of the Karkotas, of which Lalitaditya Mukhapida was an illustrious king of Kashmir, was of the Naga tribes (Bisht 1986).

The *Pishachas* are also looked down upon. We do not know for certain from where they originated. Let us pay attention to Bisht (1.c.)...No wonder if the Nagas were the first settlers of the valley, who after a long time came in contact with advanced *Daityas*, whose remains perhaps we find in the form of pre-Harappan items at Burzhom. They greatly influenced and changed material life of the Neolithic people although the contact did not last long. . .the earliest people of Semthan were not surely those who came into contact and fought with Nagas . . . So where does this lead to? The Neolithic outsiders, the Aryans usurpers !

From a cultural point of view the following dates are important as these provide an amalgam for intercultural waves to and through Kashmir to the adjacent regions. Perhaps it is difficult to point to any one feature as purely Kashmirian in its composite culture.

Of the sixteen great states that existed in the sixth century BC in north India one was the state of Gandhara. "Gandhara sometimes also included Kashmir (Jataka no 406), and Hecataeus of Miletus (549-460 BC) refers to Kaspapyros (Kasyapapura, i.e., Kashmir) as Ghandaric city" (Law 1980)¹⁹.

Some scholars find in the Avestan passages indication of a political hold which old Iran had established on North India

in pre-Achaemenian times. But corroboration of the details of this political connection are lacking. It is generally held that the eastern conquest of Cyrus included the districts of Draugiana, Satagydia and Gaudaritis (Gandhar) (Herodotus 1,153,177). "Cyrus appears to have subjugated the Indian tribes of the Paropanisus (Hindukush) and in the Kabul valley especially the Gandharians".

Alexander (ca.330 BC) during his retreat "...Ambhi to rule the west of Jhelum; and the King of Abhisara to rule Kashmir with the state of Arsaces (Urasa, Hazara) added to his kingdom. (Mookerji 1980).

Asoka (173 BC)²⁰ sent Majjhantika as a missionary to Kashmir and Gandhara, Kashmir was part of his empire. He founded the city of Srinagiri (Srinagar) in 263-226 BC. *The Rajatrangini* mentions Jalauka (232 BC) as Asoka's successor in Kashmir (cf Mookerji 1.c.). "He conquered the country up to Kanauj. He is said to have crushed the invading Mlechchha horde which probably refers to an invasion by the Bactrian Greeks".

The seventh century Kingdom of Kashmir was a hilly country between the Indus and the Chenab (-Tawi) to the foot of the Salt range in the south (Cunningham 1924). By the early sixth century the Hun rulers Taramma and Mihirakula claimed the Panjab and Kashmir as part of their kingdom. In the mediaeval Indian period Kashmir because of its well defined natural frontier was "rarely much affected by the constant strife in the great plains" (Basham 1.c.).

In the spread of Buddhism, Kashmir provided the main routes of dispersal to Central Asia, N. China, Mongolia. This had great cultural impact on Central Asia during the ancient period. "The impact lasted from ca. 3000 BC to 800 AD for several thousand years. Buddhism spread in Central Asia and China through the efforts of the scholars of Kashmir.. the deep impact of Buddhism on Central Asia brought about a fundamental change in the socio-religious life of the people. "Throughout this period Kashmiri scholars and missionaries

continued to visit Central Asia, and spread the message of Gautam Buddha there" (Ahmed 1985). Incidentally, the gorgeous plain tree the chinar²¹, *boni* in Kashmir, could have been introduced during this period into Kashmir²².

Incidentally we may refer here to the aspect of the moon²³. *Zoon mauj* vs *Chanda mama* (mother moon vs uncle, maternal, moon). The moon is considered masculine in Rgvedic tradition and culture; that the term *zoon* could be derived from a Sanskrit base is of no consequence here. The *Bible* and the *Quran* hold the moon as masculine as well, except that occasionally the *Quran* also refers the gender as neutral. In Kashmiri the term is feminine through the ages (the Muslims of today also consider her as *mauj*!).

Zoon Ded (name adopted by an elderly woman)

Zoon Mal (name of married woman)

Zooni (young lass, only Muslim)

To us, it indicates if anything else, a fundamental *divide* between Rgvedic Brahmins and Kashmiri Brahmins (including the laterday Muslim converts)

Zoon chhai gindan tarkan siet (moon is playing with stars; *chhai* feminine verb vs *chhui* masculine in Munshi, 1993)

Zoon mauj zooni. . . *Rahmanus vandur nasmondar chtan* (the monkey cuts the nose of Rahman). It appears to be of recent origin; even then the gender of moon is not changed for Rahman (a Muslim). Munshi (1993) wrongly assigns masculine gender to moon (refer pp 263, 265) !

The Kashur

According to Grierson (1927), Kashmiri language (*kashur*) belongs to the Dardic group. Burrow (1975) considered Dardic languages only as "of great interest for linguist history". The modern languages of "the main block of the Indo-Aryans developed very much on parallel lines; he considered Kashmiri

as one of the literary languages to have emerged from this block. In the Dardic, Grierson included three languages : *Shina*, *Kashmiri*, *Kohistani*. He believed Kashmiri to have developed in Dardistan, which, according to Mc Crindle (1901), was situated to the north-west of Kashmir along the banks of the Indus; and the people were called Dardai, the Daradas of Sanskrit literature. Dardistan is the mountainous region lying between NW Punjab and the Pamirs. Dardic is also sometimes called *Paishachi*. It belongs to the same sub-family of the Aryan group of languages as Kashmiri. The standard form of Dardic is known as *Shina* and is spoken around Gilgit the original Dard settlement !

Kargil is "the only place in the world where pure Aryans can be found. Down the Indus from Khaitse in the Da Hanu area there exist Dard villages which have preserved a culture and a way of life distinct from those. anywhere else in the world" (Singh H 1992).

Kalla (1978) does not agree with Grierson's views, basing his argument on the basic ingredients *tatsam* and *tadbava* words (for details see Kalla l.c.). He is categorical that Kashmiri is not different from Vedic Sanskrit or classical Sanskrit. He also states that *Kashmiri is as old as the Vedic language more so as that of the Rgveda*. He laments that it is *difficult to trace its origin !* (italics mine). Further he classified Kashmiri into the following five groups :

1. Vedic period, 2350 BC—500 BC.
2. Classical Sanskrit period, 500 BC onwards.
3. Prakrit period, 500 BC—500 AD.
4. Aprabhramsha period, 500 AD—AD 1200.
5. Persian and Arabic period, 1300 AD onwards.

We have no intention to summarize or refer to other similar authoritative works except to say that their arguments appear Sanskritic and chauvanistic. Yes, they have dealt at length with words similar in both the languages with roots (occasionally alleged to) in Sanskrit. There is no quarrel with the fact that Kashmiri leans heavily on Sanskrit as would any

language of an area ruthlessly ruled by an alien and with the local population eliminated. However, we understand the situation as given below.

Notwithstanding all types of intrusions in the life style, the Kashmiri language has maintained general continuity between the past and the present; and continues to be the only language spoken by the Kashmiri Pandits, Muslims and Sikhs of the Valley.

Indo-European

Dardistan region

Ancient Kashmir

Post Aryan

Dard and Kashmiri

Indo-Aryan

Rgvedic Sanskrit

Iranian

We hold that the first words named by the early man were those of his body, his kith and kin and his surroundings. How many of these are distinct (non Sanskritic) ? I cite a few terms here.

Parts of body

deka, forehead

maswal, hair

buth, face

wuth, lips

hongin, chin

khowur, left

khush, left handed

osh, tears

zang, leg

nam, toe nail

mandul, bottom

Relations

mauj, mother

naichiu, son

koor, daughter

kulai, wife

khor, foot

talpout, sole

yadd, belly

khunvath, ankle

neoth, toe

Reflections

wadun, to weep

asun, to laugh

krakh, shouting

bozun, listening

roon, husband
 hash, mother-in-law
 noush, daughter-in-law
 zam, husband's sister
 mound, widow
 pitr, uncle (father's brother)
 baimi, sister's husband
 hahr, wife's brother
Animals/plants
 khar, donkey
 cockur, cock
 cockir, hen
 chaeir, sparrow, bird
 tang, pear
 tsunt, apple
 doon, walnut
 chaer, opriocot

drukh, vomiting
Surroundings
 vath, road } in respect
 daer, window } of house
 pash, roof
 hewr, up
 bon, down
 sheen, snow
 haer, staircase
Miscellaneous
 toor, a bowl like vessel
 longun, wooden mug
 vaej, ring
 suin, cooked vegetable.

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NOTES

1. There could not be a better person than the illustrious Kashmiri intellectual, Prof P.N. Pushp, in whose honour one could start this quest. May god bless him with many a healthy, fruitful and meaningful professional activities for many a year to come. Unfortunately Prof Push has passed away before this volume could appear—Ed!
2. Present address. C 28 Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi 110048.
3. Ray and Ghosh (1986) have no convincing proof against the presumed presence of Palaeolithic in Pahlgam !
4. Interestingly, "the cultural sequence does not suggest that there is indigenous development of Neolithic in Kashmir itself but people from somewhere else migrated into the area and settled" (Roy and Ghosh, 1986)
5. The shape and form of handmade Burzhom grey pottery have no parallel in North China (cf. Kachroo 1995).
6.Wheat, barley and lentil had much earlier antiquity than rice which is the staple food of Kashmiris today. The latter may have been introduced in period IIc (Megalithic culture) at the site (cf Singh 1986).
7. "The Kashmiri still repeats in his daily worship Vedic hymns composed over 3000 years ago. (Basham 1975).
8. "Tilak argues that the most ancient of Vedic Hindus inhabited the arctic regions, the Land of the Midnight Sun. . His theories merit attention" (Sidarth 1985).
9. "Though the majority of the western and a great number of Indian scholars still consider the Aryans as outsiders, an increasing number on Indian and foreign writers advocate their Indian origin. To academics of integrity the question is still open" (Mukherjee 1995).
10. The Bogha Koi inscription dated 1400 BC places Rgvedic date prior to this say 2000 BC (Winternitz), some move this to 2500 BC. Indian scholars Jacobi and Tilak conceive 4000 BC as the date of migration of the Aryans to India (cf Singh 1986).
11. "Words for tree which are common to both the eastern and western branches of the Indo European languages number only half a dozen, the most important of which is the term for birch; the number of words for animals is also limited." (Sharma 1993).
12. Sharma rightly observes that the horse is absent from the seals and terracota figures of the mature Harappan phase (2100-1900 BC) (Mukherjee 1995).
13. "Frawley asserts that, in Rgveda, Arya is only a title of honour (page 13). In his opinion, there is no evidence of the Aryan migration to India either in a large number or in small groups" (Mukherjee l.c.).

14. "Of the people with whom the Aryans came into conflict the most powerful were the Nagas in the west and Magadihas in the east" (Munshi 1980).
15. Balto-Slavonic and Indo-European groups show special similarities with Albanian and Armenian. These languages are often grouped as *satem* (hundred) languages. The Indo-Iranian language shows no affinity with other Indo-European languages except that with Greek (Burrow 1975).
16. 800-600 BC Anatolia Indo European language.
17. 600 BC onwards inscriptional evidence of Indo-Iranian speaking people in Iran!
18. While citing different routes between India and China through Central Asia inter alia Majumdar (1980) stated that there was also a much shorter and direct but difficult road from Kashmir along Gilgit and the Yasin valleys and through the Darkat and Baroghil Passes to the last mentioned route in the Wakhan valley.
19. In Ptolmy's *Geography*, Kashmir appears in the form of Kaspeiria whose sovereigns of which had extended their rule far beyond the present (AD 1901) Kingdom of Kashmir.
20. His rule extended from Hindukush to Bengal in the north. Kanishka extended his authority from Baktria to Kashmir and from Oxus to Surashtra; Kashmir either in whole or in part was included in the dominions of Abisaros who may be ranked as a potentate on a level with Taxilla and Poros.
21. Fotidar (1987) has meticulously and authoritatively documented the introduction of *boin* into Kashmir. "The first record somewhat authentic places it ca.1000 AD. .the probable time. . somewhere between 1000 BC and AD 1000. .the most significant period starts with 300 BC" (for more details see Fotidar 1.c.). The first reference to the tree *boin* is in the *vakya* (epigram) of the famous mystic poetess of Kashmir Lal Ded (ca. AD 1390) *who lived two centuries before Babur came to India*" (Fotidar 1.c. italics mine).
22. The term *boin* is used in Central Asia (eg, Khazikstan) for a sampling.
23. "In Europe, the moon was one of the very first objects in nature that human beings invested with divinity; a female deity if only because its companion deity the sun was as aggressively masculine" . . . "The moon worship was the very first "religion" of Europe; that even in the Bronze Age, the moon was looked upon as the Earth Mother, who controlled the seasons, fertility and the cycle of birth and death. (Manohar Malgonkar 1996, The religion of the moon. The Statesmoon May 20, 1996).

Chapter 2

KASHMIR : SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF ITS COMPOSITE CULTURE

S.L. SHALI

Despite being surrounded by spectacular ranges of mountains on all sides, the Valley of Kashmir has maintained close socio-cultural contacts with India and beyond. The mountains served as effectual barriers for a long time against foreign invasions, enabling the Valley to maintain its own individuality and indigenous culture. On the basis of the overwhelming evidence made available through extensive research in geology, geography, archaeology and in bio-sciences in recent years¹, fresh information of an extremely interesting nature has come to light, suggesting that there was frequent cultural intercourse and unrestricted movement of men and material from one region to the other right from prehistoric times leading to mutual interaction, fusion, blending of different cultures, ideologies, arts and crafts. There is considerable evidence available now to identify and distinguish different cultural patterns and fabrics that have gone into making the mosaic of Kashmir's composite culture.

The Valley of Kashmir is a broad synclinal basin largely filled with an ancient lake alluvium. The sediments that have filled the lake-basin during a series of glacial and interglacial events that the Valley has witnessed, are the plateau-like terraces commonly called *Karewas*. In the *Karewas*, sediments preserved the climatic record of Kashmir Valley². As a result of multi-disciplinary research, a sequence of broad climatic

trends has been determined. The *Karewa* sediments have presented a fascinating climatic evidence, chain of glacial and interglacial events, progressive uplift of Pir Panchal, formation of a primaeval lake, its stages of shrinkage, emergence of river Jhelum, findings of fauna and flora and other related events.

Human occupation in Kashmir depended on the weather cycle. The population movement was severely restricted by the extension of ice sheets during the periods of peak glaciation. For these reasons, the high altitude glaciated regions in Himalayas are poor in prehistoric sites³. That human settlements have increased or decreased in the Valley due to climatic changes is amply borne out by the literary sources and by the new field investigations. The geological formation has been referred to in the literary work *Nilamata-purana* (6th-7th century A.D.) and in the celebrated Kashmiri historian Kalhana's chronicle *Rajatarangini* (1148-49 A.D.). While writing his chronicle, Kalhana seems to have used the works of early chroniclers in the field and also collected first hand information from inscriptions, copper plates, various eulogies, family records and other oral evidences. From the detailed sedimentological studies of the Kashmir *Karewas* also, duly substantiated by a number of c^4 dates, a well-defined chronostratigraphy to delineate the climatic changes in the Valley is available. The Valley has witnessed climatic amelioration at circa 18,000 B.P., at circa 5000 B.P., at circa 18,000 B.P. and circa 1000 B.P. when human settlements thrived in the Valley ranging from Upper Palaeolithic to historical times⁵.

In the past, stray discoveries of stone implements were made, which suggested that the human occupation in the Valley occurred when the area was warmer and wetter. The people have always migrated from one place to another for survival and economic reasons. Natural catastrophe compelled the prehistoric man to resort to migration. Untimely snowfall, closing of passes, loss of flocks or herds of animals, dearth of vegetables, eruption of crevasses, volcanoes, cloud bursts always threatened his existence. He had to keep adapting,

himself to new environments and surroundings. Only those human beings who were successful in protecting themselves in the changed circumstances survived.

Numerous regions of the Valley—high grasslands, *margs*, meadows or the ancient beds of the dried up lakes—are still unexplored or have only received superficial or cursory examination. Several isolated discoveries of early stone age tools were made in a very unsystematic way in the past and their presence leads to the conclusion that the early man wandered between the Punjab and Kashmir but could not occupy the Valley for a longer period because of continuous process of tectonic disturbances. So also plants and animals flourished in and around the primeval lake (in Kashmir) and were carried down because of geological changes by the streams or became mixed up with the remains of the low level aquatic vegetables. Their remains are now found in the ancient beds of that lake or the present day lakes, probably the remnants of that lake.

The palaeolithic stone tools were earlier reported in three widely separate parts in north-west India: One at Chitta, south-west of Rawalpindi in the Potwar plateau, another at Pampur from the lower terraces of the river Jhelum in Srinagar district and third at Kargil, an important station on Srinagar-Leh national highway. Of these, Pampur is said to belong to the same group of flake industry as found in Chitta but is reported to be of more refined workmanship. The Kargil flake was a solitary flake of a trap stone picked up from the surface of an old terrace more or less belonging to the same group of industries. Among the lot, the flake from Pampur was unmistakably regarded as humanly worked flake implement. On the other hand, the tool found at Kargil carried its own historical importance. The area lies just beyond the Himalayan range on the ancient trade route over Zojila connecting India with Central Asia, Tibet and China⁶. The Zojila pass is the lowest passage between Indus on the one side and Chenab and Jhelum on the other. An important characteristic of it is that

there is a great rise to it from the Valley side and a very slight fall on the Ladakh side⁷. It must have afforded an easy traverse across the Himalayas. In a similar geographical situation, full fledged palaeolithic tool industry is encountered in the Soan valley⁸. This evidence is further strengthened by the discovery of tool-bearing terraces in Beas and Banganga valleys, Punjab⁹ and in Eastern Punjab¹⁰. This event is again repeated in Jammu¹¹. Scarcity of such palaeolithic sites in the Valley of Kashmir was attributed to the repeated uplifting of the Pir Panjal range as it would have been a dangerous zone for the early man to live in.

There was a renewed effort in tracing the arrival of the palaeolithic man in the Kashmir Valley when early pebble tools were picked up from the glacio-fluvial deposits at Pahalgam in the Liddar valley¹². In continuation of this discovery, first of its kind after Dettera and Patterson's detailed work in the Valley, about a dozen more such tools were obtained from the same area when a detailed study of the quaternary formations of the Liddar valley was conducted by the team of experts soon after the initial discovery in 1971¹³. These discoveries prompted many archaeologists from India and foreign lands to make a whirlwind survey of the area further, but absence of tools, as reported by them raised doubts about the genuineness of these tools¹⁴.

The deglaciation in the Valley started between c. 20,000 and 18,000 years B.P. when a warmer climate was experienced. In a way, it strengthens the earlier conclusion that the Palaeolithic Man did not discover the Valley till the end of the ice age. He must have been encouraged to come over here soon after the land was freed from ice and snow. His main aim in this adventure, no doubt a risky one, was to search for deer, bear and fish in order to sustain himself¹⁵.

During the course of reconstructing the climatic changes witnessed in the Valley, a Palaeolithic site of chopping complex was reported on the Pirpanjal side on the top terrace of the river Rembiara at Balapura, Tehsil Shopian, district

Pulwama¹⁶. Again a well worked out chopper tool with flake scars was also picked up from the upper reaches of Sukhnag, district Badgam¹⁷.

The Kashmir palaeoclimatic project (1980-89) made an interesting and impressive exposure of lithic industry represented by distinct blade and burin finds having upper palaeolithic affiliations dated c. 18000 B.P. These finds were discovered at Sombur, 12 miles south-east of Srinagar, district Pulwama. More than 100 artifacts were collected demonstrating the use of prepared core technique in fabrication. Besides, this lithic industry, the first of its kind, is based on jasper, silicious limestone and trap. The percentage of utilised flakes and also the number of tools in jasper was greater than the other two varieties of the raw material. Further, this industry of upper palaeolithic type was also found at Kulladur, Bhatchak, Tapriballa, Pyathapathun, Huin in Baramullah district and at Khan Sahib and Haba Shah Sahib in Badgam district. Tools made of flakes as found at these sites are marked by cores, pounders, grinders, borers and points but without any ceramic association. Polished tools in these categories are absent. The site at Sombur is famous for its bone bed as it has yielded fossil remains of fish, bird eggs, shell fragments, body remains of lizards and *elephas hysudricus*. These tools noticed in these sites were categorised in a definite cultural horizon stratigraphically as it has been ascertained in some of the localities that these have definitely preceded the widespread neolithic settlements in the Valley. The data so furnished make it out that the neolithic culture had technological affinities with this earlier culture, going back to upper palaeolithic times. The evolved tool industry both in stone and bone types is known from the ceramic horizons of neolithic traditions¹⁸. This period of 18,000 B.P. is marked by climatic amelioration at Butapatri situated about 66 kms south-west of Srinagar and 12 kms from Gulmarg where at this time broad-leaved elements seem to dominate at the cost of conifers. Such evidences have been confirmed by other several parameters¹⁹.

Around 10,000 B.P., the Valley witnessed again cooler conditions and excessive rains resulting in the tremendous erosion of the land. This forced the people to move to sub-Himalayan regions or Gobi desert of Central Asia. Environmental conditions were primarily responsible for absence of human habitation in the Valley in Mesolithic stage²⁰. However, the Kashmir climate underwent a gradual change and by 5000 B.P., the conditions for human occupation were suitable and there was a sudden proliferation of neolithic settlements in the Valley.

The neolithic culture of the land evolved from the Upper Palaeolithic traditions has been enriched from the movements from the other neighbouring regions through the passes connecting the Valley with these areas. This process continued in the following centuries as well. This is substantiated by literary records and archaeological evidences. As such Kashmir has been a cradle of many races whose languages and cultural patterns were fused into a composite group.

The densely distributed neolithic culture mainly occupies the tops of the plateaus invariably overlooking either some perennial streams, lakes or the rivers or in some cases is in close proximity to low marshy lands. Settlements located on the Himalayan flank in the Valley are represented by megaliths lying over the neolithic remains while on the Pir Panjal side, these are mostly devoid of such monuments.

A highly developed neolithic culture spread throughout the length and breadth of the Valley shows an important change in the way of life of the early man almost in the changed climatic and environmental conditions. He invented ground and polished tool technology, discovered the means of food production, started domestication of animals, invented pottery and started settling down in villages. The cultural and structural sequence is now very well recognized through the excavations conducted at major sites located at Burzhom, district Srinagar and at Gufkral, Tehsil Tral, district Pulwama. The earlier stage at both the sites is marked as 'Aceramic' level as no pottery evidence was forthcoming which signifies the presence of

cultural traits from the foregoing upper palaeolithic traditions though there is advance in other fields. The earliest period at these sites is marked by dwelling pits with varied shapes of stone and bone tools. In the next phase, instead of dwelling pits, mud wall or mud brick structures are emerging. A series of post halls in one of the trenches shows that the houses were provided with timber roofing. Human as well as animal burials made their appearance in this period. The burials are either primary or secondary and within the settlement.

The presence of dwelling pits, circular, rectangular or square, a developed bone industry comprising of harpoons, long and curved awls, needles with or without eyes, harvesters, arrow heads, long and short points, spears, borers, daggers, scrapers, grain pullers, pins, horn picks, pen shaped points, double edged points, bodkins, personal ornaments like beads, pendants, combs, etc; polished and ground stone tools consisting of axes, adzes, chisels, gravers with curved and oblique working edges, double edged perforated picks, flake knives, harvesters with perforations, sling balls, hammers, pounders, querns, mace heads, long and short sized points, beaked and shouldered ended points, awls, needles, etc; purposeful burials of pet animals along with the masters, stray finds of copper like arrow heads, pins, and painted or grooved pottery or the sprinkling of the burials with red ochre or the trepanning of the skull are without parallels in the subcontinent and the parallels are to be found beyond the frontiers of the Valley²¹. There appear typological affinities of the Kashmir neolithic traits with the Yang Shao cultural traits of North China²², or the sites in the Tarim basin showing a blend of east and west²³, with Kot Diji in West Pakistan or Hissar in Iran²⁴, with Aq Kupruk or Darra-i-Kur in Afganistan²⁵, with Sikkim²⁶ and metal objects found in the excavations with Harappan or pre-Harappan cultures across the border and so on²⁷.

The discovery of a large number of tools from the excavated sites suggests that the economy of the neolithic people in Kashmir in about 2,500 B.C. was based on hunting,

fishing and fowling. Besides, the presence of hoes, harvesters, picks, ring stones indicate that the people possessed rudimentary knowledge of agriculture. This is also substantiated by the botanical remains which belonged to the ancient crops of wheat, barley and lentil²⁸. Still, hunting was of paramount importance which is understood from the engravings by the neolithic man himself found at the site of Burzhom (P.II) depicting a horned stag being killed by a spear from the rear and by bow and arrow from the front²⁹.

Kashmir neolithic tradition portrays a well stratified society capable of fixed settlement. Because of favourable climatic conditions, there were frequent movements of the people from outside through the ancient routes of Srinagar-Baramulla and Srinagar-Leh as many sites of the neolithic traditions were spotted on these routes. The former closely follows the course of river Jhelum and crossing over Urusha (modern Hazara) leads to North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (ancient Gandhara) and then to Iran on the one side and on the other to Afghanistan and further to Central Asia. It is through this route known in ancient times as Western Gate of Kashmir that Hiuen Tsang entered the Valley in 631 A.D. The other route after crossing Zojila connects the Valley with Dras, Kargil, Leh (Ladakh) and then with Tibet, Central Asia and China. This route was followed by great adventurers like Rinchana (14th century) and Mirza Haider Dughlat (16th century) who have in their different ways changed the course of history in Kashmir. The discovery of neolithic finds on these routes reveals that these were most important thoroughfares right from prehistorical times.

Despite close contact with the regions outside the Kashmir Valley the people maintained their distinct identity. They continued with their own economy which is evident from the varieties of stone and bone tools or ceramics that they produced with extraordinary skill, perfection and standardization even when they came into contact with their contemporary people, Harappans, who happened to be more advanced. The neolithic

people on the other hand assimilated new techniques, enriched their economy in whatever way it suited them whenever they came into contact with the outsiders, but did not discard their own style of living and subsistence. The cultural patterns of the neolithic times had a profound effect in shaping and development of cultural trends in the subsequent periods of Kashmir's history as well.

The megaliths are installed after the close of neolithic culture in the Valley. These are represented by Menhir type of large stones. Mostly these upright stones are found in groups and in very exceptional cases are located alone. Like the foregoing neolithic culture, the megalithic culture also does not bear any affinity with the cultures in the sub-continent. Placed in the time bracket of 1000 to 700 B.C, they are non-sepulchral in character. The earlier tools in bone or stone are found in low numbers. The early pottery of grey ware is almost absent. The black burnished ware, deluxe ware of period II of neolithic culture encountered here is of poor fabric and is devoid of polish. Gritty red ware predominates. The main representative shapes are storage pots with bulbous bodies of a coarse fabric. Some miniature pots of the earlier phase in thin red ware are also found. Black and red ware usually associated with the megaliths in the south is conspicuously absent. Iron objects are less in number at Buzahom while at Gufkral a fairly good number of iron objects in the form of points and rods have been found. Due to presence of limited number of iron or metal objects or the absence of associated ceramics or burials, the megaliths here do not bear any link with other group of megaliths elsewhere. They, therefore, indicate a kind of socio-religious custom emerging in the Valley at that period of history. It appears that these standing Menhirs initiated the people for the image worship which comes plainly into view towards the upper level of savagery³⁰.

With uninterrupted flow of movements from outside, there was steady increase in the population and hence a need to extend the area under cultivation. Wheat and barley which

continued to be the main crops right from the neolithic times, were supplemented by the introduction of rice cultivation which from that time formed the staple food of the inhabitants because of fertile ground and abundance of water for cultivation of such a crop. It is claimed that its cultivation in the Valley must have come from the plains possibly from the Indo-Gangetic plains along with the migration of the people³¹.

Kashmir archaeology, as a result of patronage by the Central Department of Archaeology since 1958-59, proudly boasts of its brilliant achievements in the fields of exploration and excavation. The scientific survey carried out in the Kashmir Valley has resulted in the exposure of many prehistoric, early historic and historic habitational sites. Besides, the excavations at Burzahom, an international site of neolithic culture in the Valley and at Gufkral have revealed sufficient clues on the first settled life of early Kashmiris. The cultural contacts that followed in a still wider context can be gleaned now from the excavations at Semthan,³² a village situated on the left bank of river Jhelum about 44 km. from Srinagar near the ancient town of *Vijayeshavara* (modern Bijibehara) district Anantnag.

The earliest stratum is defined by the Pre-Northern Black Polished Ware. Its main ceramic fabric is the sturdy red ware treated with red slip. The most striking type is a composite form of a bowl on stand. Both are centrally hollow. Such forms bear generic relation and resemblance in surface-dressing and fabric with the late phase of the post-Harappan shapes of Banawali and Bara and other cognate wares of Punjab and Haryana forms where from they could have come. This period has been dated as 500-700 B.C. and is followed by Northern Black Polished Ware (500-200 B.C.)

One metre thick deposit of N.B.P. deposit at Semthan is recognized in association with red and grey ware having a broad uniformity with the ceramic industries of India. The common shapes are characterised by dishes, bowls, vases and *handis*. The structural activity is known from the rubble wall and successive floor levels. Besides pottery, other cultural

material is represented by beads of different material, objects of iron, bone stylus and cast copper coins from the upper levels³³. Subsequently many more sites were discovered in the Valley³⁴. With its discovery, the domination of the Valley by Mauryas and its emperor Ashoka, a debatable issue till then, stands archaeologically resolved³⁵.

The next period is recognized as Indo-Greek period (200 B.C. to 1st century A.D.). Kashmir was since early times associated with Gandhara and during this period the entire region witnessed a series of foreign invasions by Indo-Bactrian Greeks, Shakas and Parthians, and then by Great Kushanas. During this period in Kashmir, artistic elements received a new impetus. The Indo-Greeks were responsible for the spread of Buddhism to Central Asia and China by carrying with them artistic and Indo-Hellenistic Buddha images or Buddhist symbols wrought in Gandhara and Kashmir³⁶. The Buddhist art received wide circulation under Kushanas more so under its powerful and great king Kanishka.

The Kushana period (1st century to 5th century A.D.) was a period of stability in economy, advancement in trade and a remarkable growth in the prosperity of the people in Kashmir. The cultural movement was at its zenith. Art and architecture received an unprecedented push. Kashmir was a popular centre of Buddhism. Many scholars wrote Buddhist texts which attracted the aspiring scholars from outside. They came here and returned to their native lands after having acquired knowledge of different schools of Buddhist thought. In this way, Kashmir made a great literary contribution to neighbouring regions, especially to China, Tibet and republics of Central Asia. The first Chinese translation of *Gathas* was made by a Kashmiri scholar Dharmatrata in 221-223 A.D. Harivarman, a famous Buddhist scholar of Kashmir composed his work *Satyasidhi Shastra* in 253 A.D. This process continued for a longer period. Scholars were always on the move from China to Kashmir and vice versa. As a result of this, Buddhism became the religion of the masses.

A 4 m. thick deposit at Semthan has presented a reliable data on the various phases of the occupation by the Kushanas, Kidara Kushanas and also the destruction of Buddhist structures by the Huns. The earlier phase of building activity is known by the exposure of mud bricks, rubble and diaper pebble walls with associated floor levels, and in the next phase the structures are marked by rubble stones without utilising any intervening cementing material. The top-most deposit of this period yielded several coins of Hun rulers. Thin red ware of the earlier phase is now replaced by thick ware of the same fabric but treated with red slip of a bright colour. The pottery is characterised by the usual shapes of bowls with tapering sides and varieties of small pots with spherical bodies. The most significant yield from the explored sites or the excavated ones are the terracotta tiles with human and animal motifs. The earlier phase of this art is known from mountainous sites of Hoi-Nar, Lidroo, Doni Pather, Yaren Yender, Guddrnakh, Huthamur (ancient *Shakta Matha*) in and around the health resort of Pahalgam, 89 kms from Srinagar. The mature phase of this art is noticed at Harwan (ancient *Shadarhadvana* or the grove of six saints), 21 kms from Srinagar and only 6 kms from famous Moghul garden Shalimar.

Situated to the north-east of Srinagar, Harwan identified as Kalhana's *Shadarhadavana* has yielded Buddhist *stupas*, bases of chapels, broken figures and toes of terracotta figures, terracotta curls of Buddhist images, clay votive tablets bearing in relief miniature *stupas*. These plaques of *stupas*, with Buddhist creed, *ye Dharma*, etc. in Brahmi characters is recorded. Numerals in *Kharoshthi* script are generally stamped on the terracotta tiles which are the most impressive product of the site. They contain variety of representations reflecting economic and social life of the people of those times and the fauna and flora of the Valley. The chief motifs are frets, wavy lines, fine bone patterns, conventional flowers, different combination of flowers, and their multiple designs, lotus plants and leaves of aquatic plants still grown in the neighbouring Dal

Lake, flowers in full bloom, running, flying geese in rows, ducks, cocks, rams fighting, cows suckling their young, elephants, deer, archers on horseback shooting arrows or chasing the deer, dancing girls, musicians, men and women conversing with each other while holding a lotus stalk or sometimes a cup of wine, emaciated monks, etc. In short, these motifs depict realities of life and the ecological features of the land. Moulded with a design in bas-relief, these terracotta plaques are unique in Indian art. They represent motifs of more than half a dozen alien civilizations of the ancient world besides others which are local and indigenous. These were laid over the courtyard of the temple and on the sides of the platform. identical tiles, though far less in numbers, were also obtained from other sites e.g. Ahan (Baramulla), Kralchak (Anantnag), Takiya Bala (Pulwama).

Recently, monk cells were unearthed around the earlier phase of Buddhist establishment, at the lower terrace each measuring 2.30 mts × 1.20 mts. Major portion of these stand damaged by fire as is evident from burnt layer sealing the earlier structures. Over and above the burnt layer, the enclosure wall of the triple based *stupa* is constructed which is an effort by later Kushanas to revive their establishment after the havoc caused to it by the Huns. Instead of diaper pebble material, these were built in diaper rubble material.

After the fall of Kushanas, there was political instability throughout North India. The state of uncertainty had its effect the socio-political set-up of Kashmir as well which was further heightened by the advent of the Huns. Mihirkula, the Hun chief advocated Shiva faith which in fact revived the Hindu religion. This strata at Semthan is related to the splendid galaxy of monuments which are known for their refinement, gracefulness and architectural accomplishment. They are the pride of Kashmiris. These monuments ranging from 5th-6th century to 13th century A.D. belonging both to Brahmanical and Buddhist faiths³⁷ are the best testimony to the inherent aesthetic and artistic adaptability of Kashmiris. The development of

architecture reached its greatest heights during the 8th-9th century A.D. in great Lalitaditya's monument at Martand (Anantnag) or the Buddhist or Brahmanical structures at his capital city Parihasapura (Baramulla) and at the capital of Avantivarman (Pulwama). In fact these were the models for the rest of the structures that sprung in the Valley till the end of 13th century A.D. The conception of Brahmanical temples in particular followed the character and arrangements to a great extent from the *stupa* courts of the Buddhist monasteries of Gandhara. The sculptural wealth that adorns the walls or the panels has been judiciously executed with precise and utmost skill. The greatest literary contribution of this period was the world famous philosophy of Kashmir known as '*Kashmir Shaivism*' expounded by versatile scholars like Kallata, Vasugupta, Abhinavagupta, Utpala, Somananda, etc. Both the architectural niceties were also followed by Muslims too after their occupation of the Valley in mid-14th century. Though the element of wood was profusely utilised, but in the first instance they followed the plan and general layout of their mosques according to the stone monuments of the Buddhist-Hindu period. Kashmir Shaivism too had its effect in giving due recognition to the cult of Sufism which taught equality between man and man and preached universal brotherhood.

Kashmiri culture, therefore is, the product of a variety of ideas, beliefs, customs, rites or institutions. Even at present there are many shrines or holy places which are equally held in reverence by both Muslims and Hindus. It is due to centuries old process and in the first of brotherhood and against the fundamental philosophy of *Purohitas*, *Ulemas* was shown by a Shaivite preacher, Lalleshwari (1317-72 A.D.). Her sayings are still recited by adherants of all faiths. In one of her sayings, she said:

"Shiva abides in everything. Then do not discriminate between a Hindu and Musalman. If thou art wise, know thyself. That is the true knowledge of God."

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Chapter 3

SOME ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF KASHMIR

RAJESH DOGRA

One day in the spring of 1977, while driving across south-eastern parts of Kashmir valley, as we negotiated a winding hilly track, we suddenly came across the gigantic ruins of Martand. It was a 'discovery' as far as I was concerned as I had never imagined that the ruins will be so magnificent. This was soon followed by the discovery of half finished stone sculptures which we found scattered around in the fields behind the village of Khrew (around 20-25 kms east-south-east of Srinagar and around 10 km. north-east of Avantipur ruins.) Some of these had been excavated during the digging of an irrigation canal, taking a clue from which we also dug out a few from the nearby fields and installed them in the courtyard of my Advance Dressing Station (ADS) at Khrew. Many more await to be discovered and excavated from these fields. These two discoveries set me on the trail of the ancient monuments of the Kashmir Valley, some of which are described below.

Avantipur is situated on the main Jammu-Srinagar highway around 28 kms. south-east of Srinagar on the bank of river Jhelun. Two temples situated on the main highway are specially noteworthy, (1) the ruins of Avantishwar and (2) the ruins of Avantiswamin temples. These were built by the illustrious king Avantivarman (855-83 AD), who also built the city of Avantipur.

The colossal temple of Avantishvar was dedicated to Shiva. It is a *panchayatn* but the four corner shrines were probably a later addition. The main temple facing west had an array of cells around its periphery and a double chambered inposing gateway in the middle of the western row of cells. It probably had a triangular, pyramidal roof. The peripheral rows of cells consisted of 22 cells on the western flank, the ones on the other sides have disappeared.

The Avantiswamin temple is dedicated to Vishnu. It is smaller in dimensions as compared to Martand and Avantishwar, but the layout is more or less similar to these. The most remarkable thing about this temple is its decorations and the exquisitely carved idols discovered from here. Even the remaining ruins on the site are unique for their explicit carvings. The portable structures (or members), excavated from here, most of which have been removed to the SPS Museum in Srinagar, speak of the remarkable skill and the fine imagination of the artists of those times.

The architectural style of these and other contemporary temples is quite unique and can be safely ascribed to represent the contemporary Kashmir architecture of Ist millennium AD. The pyramidal roofs of these temples, of which the Shiva temple at Pandrethan is the sole surviving example, are exclusive to Kashmir architecture. But it does give an impression of early Buddhists, neighbouring Gandhar and even of the Greek styles. It is possible that the experts were summoned from the neighbouring states to execute the construction of these temples. The similarity of the layout and construction of platfroms of these temples and that of the Buddhist monasteries at Parihaspur is also remarkable. A small earthen jar recovered from Avantiswanin temple during the excavations by Daya Ram Sahni in 1913 contained coins belonging to the period from AD 883 to AD 1300 signifying that the temples must have been in use for over 500 years from 800 AD to 1400 AD. It was during the reign of Avantivarman (855-83) that the Kashmiris lived in relative peace and achieved

maximum prosperity. That period can aptly be called the 'Golden Age' of Kashmiri history. Otherwise the long history of Kashmir is replete with stories of deceits and court intrigues.

The difference between the two temples at Avantipur is interesting. While one, the Avantiswamin, is full of fine architectural details and explicit and exquisite carvings, the other, the Avantishwar, is comparatively plain and without decorations. Does it signify that this temple was hurriedly built? Or abandoned during construction? Or that it belongs to a period much earlier than presumed? What is the significance of numerous finished and half finished carvings still lying buried and scattered in the fields behind (north-north-east of) Avantipur right upto the base of the mountain Wastarwan and behind (east of) the village of Khrew? Where these carvings suddenly abandoned in the fields while on the way to Avantipur? Or they were scattered around by a freak, powerful explosion or air-strike which destroyed the temples? As a matter of fact the destruction involved mainly the suprastructure of the large and prominently situated ancient monuments (Parihaspur and Martand being the typical examples) while the smaller temples like the ones at Pandrethan and Shankaracharya, though situated on the outskirts of the capital city have been almost completely spared.

The Shiva temple of Pandrethan, situated in the centre of a spring fed pond, is located in the cantonment area at the foothills of the mountain, Zabarwan. It is almost right at the entrance of the city or Srinagar, a few meters towards the right of the battle tank displayed on the main road as one enters the city while driving from Jammu. This temple is perhaps the only intact specimen of the ancient Kashmiri architecture which has survived the forays of temple breakers (*But-shikans*). Even the harsh weather of the Valley through its hundreds of snowy winters has not been able to dismantle the temple. And that too despite it having remained half submerged under water for centuries together. These facts themselves speak of highest degree of architectural perfection achieved by the builders of

those bygone days. When W.C. Cowies visited the site in August 1865, he found the floor of the temple submerged upto one meter of water. Earlier, in 1835, Baren Charles Hugel had recorded that the temple could be reached only on a boat. Now the water level is prevented from rising above the platform by regulating the outlet from the pond through a drain constructed recently. A stone walkway leads to the northern entrance of the small temple. Above the lintel of the main door and within the trefoil arch of the entrance is carved a figure of 'Lakulisha', the deified Pashupat teacher in a sitting form. It is thought to have been built in 10th century AD (some estimate 12th century AD). The temple appears much older than that, may be from the reign of emperor Ashoka (273-36 BC) who, as per history, laid the foundation of the actual city of 'Srinagari' right here, at Pandrethan i.e., '*Puranadhishtana*', meaning 'Old Capital' in Sanskrit. A number of remarkably carved, forcefully executed and larger than lifesize statues of Shiva, Bhairava, Umavaktra, Kankali, Vaishnavi, Indrani, Lokeshwara and Buddha have been discovered from Pandrethan. These are displayed in SPS museum at Srinagar and give an idea of the sculptural art of Kashmir during the early centuries of first millennium AD.

Martand is the most magnificent of all the existing monuments in the Valley. Its imposing grandeur, even in ruins, inspires a sort of reverence which can only be experienced on visiting and witnessing the ruins. It is around 75 kms from Srinagar in south-east direction. An unsignposted insignificant looking road branches out to the right at the foothill of the mountain as we enter the holy city of Mattan (Bhavan) driving in from Anantnag. This winding hilly road takes us within 10-15 min. upto the ruins of "*Pandu Koru*" or 'Pandu Ghar' as the old Martand is known locally today or '*Koray Pandau*' and '*Pandav Lari*' as it was known earlier (during the last century). As the popular legend goes the temple complex was built by the oldest dynasty of Kashmir, the Pandavas, during their exile in 3rd-4th millennium BC. The Pandava dynasty ended around

2500 BC after ruling Kashmir for over 1300 years. The original capital city of Srinagar is supposed to have been built here by the Pandavas. Some locals still call this place Srinagar. This is perhaps the only shrine in India dedicated to the sun god "Martand". As per the *pauranic* legend the 'Mrit-and' (lifeless egg) was the thirteenth child of Aditi, the wife of Rishi Kashyap who drained the Valley of Kashmir to make it habitable and the sun was produced from this Martand.

A huge lingam lying in the inner courtyard to the left of the inner sanctum of the gate is the mute indicator of there being a Shiva temple too within the temple complex. There are references in the *Rajatarangini* to metal idols of Surya (Tamraswanin) having been destroyed by king Kalasha (1063-89) who later installed a gold image of Surya as a repentance of his earlier deeds. The history of construction of Martand is also intriguing. Historians ascribe it to King Lalitaditya Muktapida (724-61 AD) on the basis of *Rajatarangini* written in the 12th century AD and on its architectural style. But that account can be questioned. Why should Lalitaditya build such a magnificent structure so far away from his capital Parihaspur? Can we rely for finer details on a history written 400 years after an event? Even the architectural style resembles that practised by Greco-Romans during the first millennium BC. Then was it actually built by the Pandavas? Or even much earlier before them by the people visiting us from outer space and also destroyed by people attacking from outer space as suggested by Eric Van Deniken in his book "*Stones of Kiribati*"? Whatever the history of Martand, its beauty and splendour is unquestionable. Situated on the plateau (*Karewa*) of Korav-Pandav, it offers an unobstructed and magnificent view of the beautiful Valley below. Parihaspur is the place where the restoration work of Archeological Survey of India is currently going on. It is 25 kms north-west of Srinagar on the road to Pattan and Baramulla (the old trade route) just 10 minutes drive off the main road towards right side as we come from Srinagar. It is approachable by a good road and is well

sign-posted. There are innumerable temples, *mandapas* and other monuments scattered all over the '*karewa*' (plateau) of Parihaspur. Three of these deserve special mention because enough of their remains are left to give us some idea of their architectural structure and style. These are—a *stupa*, a monastery and a *chaitya* hall (temple). Parihaspur was the capital of that great conquering king of Kashmir, Lalitaditya Muktapida (724-61) who is still remembered by the locals as one of the most enterprising and benevolent kings of Kashmir. He built a large number of temples and Buddhist monasteries all around the Valley. He patronised all the religions with equal reverence. The frontiers of Kashmir extended far and wide during his reign approaching Persia through Gandhara in the west and Central Asia through Tibet and Turkestan in the north and north-east. By ninth century AD, the activity of Kashmiri architecture had shifted to Pattan, around 35 kms north-west of Srinagar situated on the road to Baramulla. Here king Shankaravarman (883-902 AD), the successor of Avantivarman built some beautifully carved temples. The remains of only two of those temples dedicated to Shiva are left now. These are Shankaragaurishwar and Sugandhesh, both situated right on the road side. The large stone blocks, which are lying scattered around in the surrounding pits still bear the example of some very fine carvings reflecting a very high quality of expertise and finess achieved by the Kashmiri artists by the end of first millennium AD, successively passing through the stages of Ludov, Shankaracharya, Parihaspur, Martand, and Avantipur. Unfortunately at Pattan the excavations seem to have been abandoned for the time being.

One thing is quite striking about the remains at Parihaspur and Pattan. That is the huge blocks of stones—some measuring up to 18 feet in length—which had been used for their construction. The Garudadhvaja at Parihaspur was estimated to be 24 yards high and perhaps four and half feet in diameter carved out of a single stone and weighing 64 tons! It must have required stupendous labour to put them together and hoist

them up without the help of modern cranes. These blocks were moulded with great mechanical accuracy and were joined together with mortar and metal dowels.

As per the history of Kashmir, the process of destruction and denudation of the golden heritage of Kashmiris was probably started by the invasion of the Valley and the annexation of the throne by the Sultans of Turkish descent, 13th century onwards. Many Brahmins fled the Valley under the threat of mass conversion during the reign of these early Sultans of Shah Miri dynasty.

Our sole sources of the history of Kashmir in general and these temples in particular is *Rajatarangini* (AD 1148-49) first authored by Kalhana during the reign of King Jaysimha and subsequently added upon and updated by Jonaraja who lived during the reign of the benevolent Sultan Zainul Abidin (AD 1420-70) and died in 1459. According to Jonaraja's *Rajatarangini* and other contemporary writers it was mainly during the reign of Sultan Sikander (AD 1389-1-13) that the temples all over the Valley were destroyed and plundered. He specially mentions the name of Suhabhata, the converted chief minister of Sultan Sikander, who derived a special satisfaction from the destruction of these ancient sites of worship. But the half excavated and half restored ruins that still remain, proudly proclaim the dedication and the imagination of the daring architects and the inspired artists of those days.

Chapter 4

PERHAPS THE LARGEST STONE CELT SO FAR DISCOVERED IN INDIA

R.N. KAW

The systematic excavations at Burzahom, District Srinagar (1960-71) carried out by Shri T.W. Khazanchi of the Archaeological Survey of India¹ and excavations at Gufkral, District Pulwama (1981) by the Pre-history Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India in Kashmir valley together with the discovery of first palaeolithic tool² from Kashmir have added a new chapter to the pre and proto history studies of Kashmir. The excavations at Burzahom yielded a large number of neolithic tools besides interesting structures³ which have been studied and published by many authors⁴. The largest stone celt discovered from Burzahom is approximately 30 cms. long having slight curvature probably used 'for digging purposes'⁵.

Similarly the excavations carried out at Gufkral⁶ also throw new light on the aceramic and ceramic periods of Kashmir Valley, besides discovery of large number of neolithic tools in stone and bone.

During the course of exploration, the Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museum, Govt of Jammu and Kashmir discovered and recorded the large-size polished axes⁷ from neolithic period at Tarakpora in Kashmir Valley.

Recently in 1988 the author visited the site at Tarakpora where from the two large size polished celts were reported. Tarakpora is a village situated in the vicinity of Wular lake at a distance of about 70 kms. from Srinagar via Sopore and 60

kms. from Srinagar via Randipur. Wular lake is the largest lake in Kashmir Valley. A number of lakes are found in Kashmir region and majority of them appear to be of glacial origin.

The Dal and the Wular lakes are fresh water lakes. The water level of the Wular lake has considerably receded during the last few decades with the result that there are land formations on its banks in the form of terraces. Tarakpora is also situated at a stone's throw from the present level of water in Wular lake on the top terrace of a 100 to 150 meters' high mount. On enquiry in village Tarakpora it was found that the discovery of three longest stone celts was accidental. While ploughing his paddy field a local farmer Mohammed Yaseen Khan, struck upon these polished stone celts at a depth of hardly 10 cm on the top terrace. Two celts are still in the custody of the farmer and only one celt is with the State Department of Archaeology in Srinagar. The abnormally long stone celt is a unique specimen, ground pecked, fine polished all over with a cutting edge 49 cm long, 21. 8. dm. girth at its centre. Another stone celt is also finely polished all over, 39 cm long. The third one (lying with the State Deptt. of Archaeology in Srinagar) is also finely polished, broken in two pieces about 40 cm long.

The 49 cm longest celt is certainly a unique one so far discovered or reported from any corner of India. It is, however, very difficult to say about the use of this abnormally long celt, but one can say that it may have been used for digging purposes as demonstrated in the photograph (see with other photos). No traces of any marks of having been used are visible on it to naked eye. However, this longest celt needs further scientific examination.

Edge angle and morphology of tools has to be considered while interpreting the notional activities of tools⁸, and behaviour of man who used it. Of course, without taking into account these two features besides edge damage pattern, striations and polish, one can misinterpret the function of tools. This could obviously lead a researcher towards wrong conclusions⁹.

Normally, the settlers in the Valley cleared the forests in the vicinity of their habitation sites for cultivation purposes by using stone axes¹⁰.

The microwear studies on the neolithic artifacts of Burzahom are significant. These studies reveal that most of the axes were used for wood cutting and chopping and some for dressing wood. Similarly some were used for digging earth and flake knives for reaping the crop¹¹. Tarakpora is also surrounded by the forests with water bodies and swampy areas.

The soil in Kashmir Valley varies from clay loam to loam in different parts. The soil of terraces at Tarakpora is soft and as such it appears that the newly discovered celts were used for digging, or ploughing fields.

The area in and around Tarakpora has not been fully explored. This is, however, essential to eliminate the possibility of the tools being intrusive or a stray example.

Although Tarakpora site has no direct association with megalithy but at a very little distance from Tarakpora a menhir type stone is lying at Gendipur in an apple orchard on a slope having deep round mortar. Locally this stone is called '*Pandav Wokhul*'. This menhir resembles the one lying at Burzahom site.

One of the fundamental problems in Kashmir Valley is the correlation between the megaliths lying on the surface of sites and the neolithic tools. Both sites (Burzahom and Gufkral) excavated so far have shown presence of megaliths.

Recently new neolithic sites not connected with any megalith have come to light in the Valley. These sites are scattered throughout the Valley. These are Wijpur and Prang in Kangan area, Kaladore in Pattan area and Sheikh Pandav in Pampore area. In Sagga area thick grey ware, furnished ware and a mace head have been reported by Mr. Shali, formerly of the Archaeological Survey of India, from Khan Sahab, Kalishpore and Dooru, respectively. A neolithic site without any traces of megalith at Gurhom Gangri on the bank of Wular lake near Safapore is also reported.

The stone celts found at Tarakpora can easily be associated with the neolithic man of the Valley.

The author has not succeeded in getting any published reference about the longest stone tool so far found in India except one celt which is 29 cms in length (still much smaller than Tarakpora celts) from Sisauli, district Badaun (U.P.)¹². As such it is certain that the 49 cm long stone celt found at Tarakpora may perhaps be the largest stone tool so far reported in India.

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Chapter 5

PAINTED WOOD COVERS FROM GILGIT, KASHMIR

J.L. BHAN

A few monasteries situated in the Western Himalyas still preserve some fine examples of wall-paintings executed after the 10th/11th century A.D., and throw considerable light on the ancient mural painting traditions of our country¹. Indian art, in this context owes much to Buddhism, which flourished in India for a considerable time and encompassed in its philosophy and art, a large area of Asia and it is in these art treasures that an Asian proudly discovers his identity². Secluded caves of Ajanta preserve an important repertoire of mural paintings of India that crystallised at Ajanta between 1st century A.D. and 7th century A.D. and had its impact on the far-flung areas of Central Asia in the north and Ceylon and other places in the south³. After the collapse of the Kushan rule, frequent tribal wars, resulting in constant bloodshed and onslaught on the northern periphery of our country, could perhaps, be accounted for the non-existence of any ancient structure that could be equated with Ajanta.

No wall painting except the ones at Bamyian and Fondukistan of an earlier period has survived in the north, though a considerable number of mural paintings have been located on the other side of the Pamir and Karakoram at Panjikent, Adzhina Tepa, Balawasti, Dun-huang and other places showing profound Ajanta influence⁴. This could perhaps be due to collapse of the Gupta empire followed by the inroads

of Hephthalite invasion in the early 6th century A.D., destroying all Buddhist structures wherever they went. However, a number of lesser kingdoms in the Western Himalayas continued to patronize the style of Buddhist art derived from the Gandharan and Gupta traditions, the art of subsequent years gradually had become stereotyped and interacted with contemporary styles.

Existence of a large number of rock-carvings, however, are known from Ladakh, Gilgit, Chilas, and other areas which once might have been commissioned by rich traders and pilgrims who frequently journeyed on the famous trade route, connecting Kashmir with Chinese Turkestan and through this trade route Indian influences travelled to Central Asia⁵. Most of the structures raised in the early centuries of our era and embellished with mural paintings in these regions have vanished and what survives of early mediaeval period is best represented by six wooden covers having beautiful paintings, found at Gilgit and preserved in the Central Asian Museum, University of Kashmir⁶. In the north, Buddhist paintings followed, broadly speaking, types fixed during Gupta period at Ajanta, though, of course, a clear stylistic distinction can be discerned after a study of minutiae execution of these painted covers. In the absence of these paintings, we could otherwise have missed the magnificent tradition of Ajanta and Central Asian paintings that possibly converged at Gilgit during the early centuries of the era and we should have never been able to imagine the richness of Kashmir mural painting tradition from the evidence of contemporary architecture and carvings. Though in a poor condition of preservation, these wooden painted covers must be considered among the earliest finds of miniature illustrations of India and possibly of Asia and serve as a vital clue to the various painting styles that flourished at Gilgit during 7th century A.D.

The finds of these painted wooden covers in the year 1931 goes to the credit of a local boy in Naupur village about three miles west of Gilgit cantonment, when he chanced to pluck an old piece of timber from a mound that later on was

identified as the ruins of a Buddhist Stupa. While looking for more fire-wood, the local people found a circular structure filled with numerous small votive Stupas of clay, manuscripts etc., a common practice observed at the various Buddhist sites of Central Asia⁷. Aurel Stein, while returning from one of his expeditions to Central Asia in June, 1931 examined the bulk of the material that was found by local people at Gilgit⁸. Subsequently, M.S. Koul excavated four Stupas at Naupur, and among the various antiquities recovered by him from these four Stupas, noteworthy are the three manuscripts bearing earliest paintings on their wooden covers, hitherto unknown in the realm of Indian art. These three painted covers with manuscripts were found in Stupa 'C' at a depth ranging from seven to eight feet. Each leaf of these manuscripts was held together by means of a string, which might have passed through a hole punched slightly away from the centre on each leaf and painted wooden covers of these manuscripts⁹.

The two birch bark manuscripts with painted covers pertain to *Samghatasutra* which had a great appeal to the pious Buddhists¹⁰. The third manuscript under study, written on palm-leaf and identified as *Aryadharma* is the only extant palm-leaf manuscript so far found at Gilgit¹¹. All the book covers are painted on both sides of small wooden panels. While soft wood has been used for the four covers of the two *Samghatasutra* manuscripts, hard wood has been used for the palm-leaf manuscript¹².

The manuscripts are written in later Gupta script, which was widespread in Western Himalayas and Central Asia for quite a considerable time. Both sides of each wooden covers are painted, the top side carrying floral design in black and yellow while actual paintings on Buddhist theme are painted on the inner side, facing the manuscripts. So far the most remarkable and significant Buddhist paintings have remained un-noticed by art historians but studied in their proper perspective, these paintings reveal a close interaction of various art styles that seem to have converged on the ancient trade

routes, connecting India with Central Asia¹³. After the seventh century A.D. the gap in the continuation of wall painting traditions ceases in the northern belt of the country, followed by its re-appearance in many Buddhist monasteries of Western Himalayas and in the famous palm leaf manuscripts of the tenth/eleventh century A.D. of the Pala period. The technique and style of Gilgit paintings show that the master artists of India were equally competent to transfer huge mural paintings of the Ajanta type to the miniature wooden panels of the minutest size of a few inches space, which probably led to the subsequent enrichment of miniature paintings after 10th/11th century A.D. This is borne out by the description of each panel. The six painted covers, although discovered during the course of the excavation of the Stupa 'C' at Gilgit, show that these were consecrated at the same time¹⁴. But, when studied minutely, they reveal three different ateliers at work. Though apparently these paintings on the manuscripts show uniformity so far as their script is concerned, yet apparently many extraneous factors have gone into their composition and reveal three different styles of art that flourished at Gilgit, lying in close proximity of Afghanistan and other art centres of Central Asia and India, what must have been widespread and contemporaneous with the art of mural paintings of our country. Each painted cover has a distinctive feature and merits a brief description :

Aryadharmā

(Mss. No. 1) contains 50 palm leaves and is written on both sides in black ink¹⁵. The manuscript is supported by two wooden painted covers and measures 21. × 5.5 cms.

(Fig. 1) shows a painting drawn in vertical composition and depicts Buddha, seated in *Dhyanamudra* on a multipetalled lotus with green aureole and buff nimbus, expounding, as usual, with his right hand raised in *Vitarka Mudra*, indicating the progress of the discourse with slightly lowered inclination of his head to his right side. The left hand holds a hem of his

red *Sanghati* with its multiple folds covering both shoulders. In the right hand held in *Vitarka Mudra*, some curious object is held. We are told that Buddha received many gifts and garments from his worshippers. In the *Prajnaparamita*, Buddha is worshipped elaborately with diverse paraphernalia of worship. However, the exact identification of the small object held by Buddha remains a problem. It may probably present a jewel and may represent *Chintamani*, or a wishing gem which satisfies all desires¹⁶. The round face, eyes and lips, agree in their character with features in the Adzhina Tepa and Farhad-Beg-Yailaki Buddha. The Buddha seated under an ornamental parasol painted in green with a chain of "pearls" and surmounted by solar and lunar symbols, placed above streamers, exposes three-fourths of his face and is engaged in addressing the donor couple¹⁷. On the lower side of the parasol, a green and red-coloured streamer flares out very elegantly towards both sides, just above the circular nimbus is filled with green colour which merges with the background colour of the wooden panel. The donor couple is drawn in diminutive size. To the right side of the Buddha, we find the female donor, wearing a turban and seated in *Anjali Mudra*, while the male donor, possibly a king of Gilgit, robed in a similar attire, carries a large golden censer in his right hand from which ascends black smoke, while a basket of flowers is held in the left hand¹⁸. The donor couple, dressed in close-fitting garments and wearing turbans in Turki fashion, with close and high neck and long coat, indicate that both donors belong to Shahi elite who might have ruled in the small principality of Gilgit, which was intimately related to the history and culture of eastern Afghanistan, Kashmir and Ladakh.

The painting of cover No. 1/b (Fig. 2) is identical with the cover (I/a) described earlier and except replacing the image of Buddha with *Avalokiteshvara*, the entire composition of cover I/a is followed. On the present panel, *Avalokiteshvara* is seated slightly cross legged on a multi-petalled lotus and as a spiritual son of *Dhyani* Buddha with his right hand held in

Vitarka-mudra a gesture of argument, while the left hand holds a three petalled lotus symbolising probably the three *Ratnas* or the triple pillars of Buddhist faith¹⁹. The head of *Avalokiteshvara* elegantly emerges out against a circular red nimbus. The hair of *Avalokiteshvara* forms an *Ushnisha* held by a ribbon while the extra hair falls in two streamers on his two shoulders. The eyebrows are elongated and joined together forming the shape of a bow²⁰. The heavy and rather swollen appearance of the eye-lids expresses prolonged endurance. There is a bit of red paint over the upper eyelids recalling the Buddha head from the Adzhina Tepa²¹. The drawing of the nose, seldom successfully managed by the Gilgit masters, is especially weak and drawn in profile. The mouth, although prettily shaped and delineated by upper and lower half only, is a characteristic of these two Gilgit paintings and a common feature of Adzhina Tepa murals²². The *Avalokiteshvara* is provided with heavy ear studs, a beaded necklace, circular wristlets, armlets, and multifaceted jewel crown. Curiously the crown has an unusual form, which is not generally seen in Kashmir and may again indicate Central Asian origin²³. A red striped scarf goes diagonally in an *Upavita* fashion across the chest of *Avalokiteshvara*, while a red coloured cloth conceals both his legs. Near the feet of *Avalokiteshvara*, as in the case of cover I/a donors appear prominently. The lady donor holds a lotus bud while the male donor is seated in *Anjali mudra* both turbaned and robed in light coats.

The second manuscript identified as *Samghatasutra* contains 90 birch bark leaves and is written, on both sides in black ink in round Gupta script is older than the *Samghatasutra* whose colophon bears date 3 equivalent to 637/8²⁴. The manuscript is also supported by two wooden covers and measures 24.5 × 8.5 cms.

The principal subject of cover II/a (Fig. 3) shows a figure of *Avalokiteshvara* standing on a lotus with his head tilted downwards and turned to the right. The face, half-closed eyes with a dreamy expression and the pretty lips agree in their

character with similar feature at Ajanta²⁵. The eye-brows are delicately arched, well separated and outstretched with profound Ajanta influence. The mouth is drawn with the large and beautiful petal-like lower lip so much admired in India and the glance of eyes is given direction by a downward undulation in the arch of the eyelid. The figure stands at ease with left leg bent at the knee and with broad shoulders, revealing effeminate waist and hips. The elongated ear lobe is pierced with a long slit as can be seen on some Central Asian paintings²⁶. The smooth black hair is piled in an elaborate chignon and slides behind the ears and elegantly falls on his shoulders. The small crown bears an outline image of his parental *Tathagata Amitabha*. A string of pearls artistically circumambulates the head and appears on the periphery of the crown. The forehead bears a simple *Tilaka* mark, a common feature of some mural paintings of Central Asia²⁷. The *Avalokiteshvara* bears a smiling expression as he stretches his right hand, blessing a donor who is seated with both hands folded reverentially at the extreme lower left edge. A lotus stalk is held by the left hand placed near his hip. *Avalokiteshvara* is bedecked with wristlets and pearl necklaces and excepting a short undergarment held with twisted hip girdle, the figure is nude to the hips and legs, with knee cape delineated prominently²⁸. This dress is conspicuous in the art of Central Asia²⁹. A long white scarf with red border elegantly moves over the shoulders and arms of *Avalokiteshvara*. The colour of the body is freely drawn in light tinted pink and shaded with burnt sienna. The grey short undergarment is contoured in dary grey. In either case the artists seems to have been fully familiar with the three dimensional aspects of Ajanta paintings. The nimbus is green and the aureole of red with buff border. Above the *Avalokiteshvara*, an image of *Dhyani Buddha Amitabha* is seated in *Padmasana* and in the attitude of meditation. The face is more round and the black hair forms a low round *Ushnisha*. The chest bears a curved line with dots suggestive of a celestial *Lakshana* or hair on his chest³⁰. The ears have elongated lobes

pierced with long slits. The colour of the body is buff and the Buddha is robed in red *Sanghati*. The hands are held together but there is some confusion in the drawing of the hands and bears close parallels with the Buddha painting of Farhad-Beg-Yailaki³¹. The nimbus is filled with red and the aureole dark brown with buff border. Klimburg has some confusion and identifies red colour as flames emitting from the shoulders of Buddha. While examining all covers, the red or buff colour is toned likewise and the artist's intention is not to show flames, as it does not appear only near shoulders but entire body³².

Judging from the character of the male donor, seated with folded hands in reverence and in rapt attention, the figure appears to be a peculiar individual, with sharp features prominent nose, having a short beard and moustaches and dressed in a long coat, with high neck and wearing a head-gear, so characteristic of a typical Gilgit Dard³³.

The cover II/b (Fig. 4) bears almost an identical painting as on cover (II/a) described earlier. Here in place of *Avalokiteshvara* we find a figure of *Maitreya* standing gracefully on *Padamaghata* in an identical manner but firmly placing his feet on the lotus³⁴. He is two armed, holding a high necked vessel in his left hand near his left hip, while he stretches his right hand in a similar manner as *Avalokiteshvara* does on earlier cover, blessing the same donor. The figure of the donor is unfortunately damaged on the present cover³⁵.

The *Maitreya* is given a crown which holds the major portion of his hair and allows extra hair to fall on his shoulders. The ears have long slits dangling circular *Kundalas*, while wristlets take prominent position near his hands³⁶. Pearl necklaces circumambulate around the neck of *Maitreya*. The anatomy of the body and its colours is prominently delineated with suitable shades as on the cover discussed earlier. The upper part of the body is bare, while the lower part of *Maitreya* is robed in a *Dhoti* of olive green colour with symmetrical folds appearing on both sides of the legs. The middle portion of the *Dhoti* falls perpendicularly in a similar fashion as we

find on most of the stone images of Kashmir. *Maitreya* is also provided with a long white scarf with red border and held by him in a similar attire. The nimbus and aureole are painted with green and yellow ochre. Similar type of nimbus or stela can be observed in paintings of Qizil (6th A.D.), Kumtura (8th/9th cent), Adzhina tepa (7th/8th cent A.D.), as well in Kashmir. *Maitreya* is standing under an ornamental parasol painted in variegated colours of white, red and yellow ochre, suggesting the *Abhisheka* or consecration of *Maitreya* image by the donor, appearing on the panel. It appears as if the master painter had conceptualised the famous statue of *Maitreya* at Darda (north of Punjab) of which Hiuen Tsang makes a reference and has eloquently brought out all the celestial features of *Maitreya*³⁷. *Maitreya* is represented much larger in size on the panel than the other figures, a tradition which continued for a long time in the North Himalayas including Gilgit even after it was wiped out at Gandhara by Huns during 6th century A.D.

Above the *Maitreya* figure we find a figure of Buddha seated on *Padmasana* in a similar manner as on the cover (II/a) with both hands held in meditation. Here the painter seems to have rectified his earlier mistake by showing fingers more prominently. The nimbus and aureole are painted in red and yellow ochre.

Judging from the style of these paintings executed on these two covers II/a and II/b, these paintings reveal a proliferation of Ajanta and Central Asian styles during the 7th century A.D. While the two principal figures of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Maitreya* are painted in typical Ajanta styles as is evident from their elongated and projected eyes, body contours and the over all colour scheme, the Buddha figures on the other hand, reveal profound Central Asian influence as reflected by their Mongoloid faces and bear close commonalities with Buddha figures painted on the walls at Farhad-Beg-Yailaki in Chinese Turkistan.

These two painted covers therefore throw a fresh light on the assimilative spirit of Indian painter as eloquently borne out

by the Gilgit artist. The painter further exhibits full command over reducing large mural paintings of Ajanta and Central Asia into a miniature size, without losing the efflorescence of mural traditions.

The third manuscript identified as *Samghatasutra* contains 120 birch-bark leaves and is written on both sides of two Mss. in round Gupta script and held by two wooden covers measuring 28.5×8.5 cms. It bears a date 3 equivalent to 627/8 at colophon. Both the wooden covers bear beautiful paintings in horizontal composition in which the elements of portraiture are clearly made manifest. These paintings differ from the paintings of other wooden covers mostly in terms of theme and stylistic minutiae.

A feature of the later phase of Ajanta is that many small figures of the Buddha are painted in little compartments on pillars and on walls. The practice followed in Central Asia as well is often observed on the murals of Adhizna Tepa in Soviet Central Asian and Chinese Central Asia. The concept of multiple Buddha figures probably reflect the growth of the mediaeval idea that mere act of multiplying images of the Buddha accumulates merit for the person who had them made. This could perhaps be the idea behind the painting of the three figures of Buddha on cover No. III/a (Fig. 5), seated in a row representing probably the Buddha of past, present and future against blue background strewn with flowers³⁸. All the figures are robed in monastic vestment. While the Buddha seated in the middle is robed in his usual attire, exposing his right shoulder and arm, the side Buddha figures are robed in red *Sanghati* with blue border appearing near the feet, the same coloured border appears near the right armpit and feet of the Central Buddha figures as well. We have the same parallels in Dunhuang paintings though in our present painting the beauty of *Sanghati* is absent and the artists has not succeeded in delineating the coloured border in proper way³⁹. The Buddha in the middle is seated on a double petalled white lotus in *Dharma Chakra Mudra* and the remaining two Buddha figures

are seated in *Dhyana Mudra*, both having orientation towards the seated central figure⁴⁰. *Ushnisha* is painted in blue, a common feature of some mural paintings of Central Asia and *Urna* sign in white is prominently discernible in the Central image. All the three Buddha figures are given yellow body colour. Each Buddha is provided with a halo and aureole, while the nimbus of the central figures has lost its simplicity, it appears patterned with designs delineated in red and blue colours but retaining their simple form as is revealed by the two nimbi given to the remaining figures. The aureole of the two side Buddhas is painted in green with white border, while the central figure has shaded red. Considerable change in the conception and treatment singles out the painting from the various examples found at Ajanta and Central Asia. Eyebrows are elongated and are moderately arched and well separated and although the mouth is very firm, the division between the lips being a straight line, the stiffness is modified by the curved red lines of the lips and the dimples at the curves of the mouth as found in Miran murals. The background is painted in blue and filled with flowers of variegated shapes, a common feature in Ajanta and Central Asian paintings.

In the *Cover III/b* (Fig. 6) the master painter of Gilgit has exhibited not only his control over the proportions of individual figures but also his ability to group various figures, forming an excellent composition in which the elements of portraiture are clearly made manifest. This exceptionally interesting painting portrays two principal figures of *Bodhisattavas*, *Maitreya* and *Avalokiteshvara* being worshipped by a royal couple. Unusual also about the two *Bodhisattava* figures is that they are represented together delicately poised on ornamental cushions⁴¹. The drawing of both figures is astonishingly alike and both are characterised by naturalistic sense of movement. Both *Bodhisattava* figures appear remarkably relaxed and poised gracefully with legs crossed at the knee, clad in *dhoti*, the colour of which is mostly peeled off, as often observed in tempera paintings. *Avalokiteshvara* is

seated with his face in three fourths profile. *Bodhisattava Padmapani* or *Avalokiteshvara* is provided with heavy princely ornaments, his right hand holds a rosary, while the left one holds a lotus. The lotus is the most distinctive attribute of *Avalokiteshvara* on which *Dhyani Buddha-Amitabha* is shown seated⁴². Mukerjee identifies this figure as *Padmasambhava*⁴³. Because of his role as savior, the cult of *Avalokiteshvara* as the saviour became extremely popular among the Mahayanist in the Gupta period which accounts for the popularity of this deity in Western Himalayas. The deity is ornamented with strings of pearls, bracelets, earrings, armlets, a huge garland and a simple tiara. His hair is held by means of tiara, allowing the extra hair to fall in uniform strands elegantly on his shoulders.

The nimbus and aureole are both painted in red with white border. *Avalokiteshvara* not only saves all human beings from immediate perils but also watches over the world till the appearance of the future Buddha. Very correctly he finds his place in the present painting along with *Maitreya* who is painted identically just in front of *Avalokiteshvara*. The Buddhist regard *Maitreya* as the future Buddha. He is believed to be living in *Thushita* Heaven, where he is engaged in preaching the true religion. Like *Avalokiteshvara*, *Maitreya* is seated in a similar fashion with his legs crossed at the knee. *Maitreya* is said to be crowned and regally attired while he preaches in the Buddhist heaven. He is represented with a tiara peaked crown, profuse jewellery, a long garland and *dhoti* with floral designs as is found in the Kara-Khota silk fabric and at Balawasti. The profuse jewellery items given to *Maitreya* brings elegantly his regal aspect rather than that of an ascetic. With his left hand, the *Maitreya* holds a high-necked pot, which is said to contain the elixir of immortality, while the right hand, held in *Vitarkamudra* and holds a rosary. B.N. Mukerjee states that the hand is held in *Abhaya-mudra* and does not mention anything regarding rosary in the hand⁴⁴. The tiara is held by means of two ribbons, both artistically flare out with profound Sassanian influence, which is a feature of

sixth to eighth century A.D. sculptures of Kashmir⁴⁵. The *Dhoti* of *Maitreya* is profusely ornamented as is often encountered in Ajanta and Central Asian murals. The nimbus is green while red colour is filled to the aureole.

In front of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Maitreya* we observe a royal couple engaged in worship. While a male figure, probably belonging to a Shahi elite, is seated and holds white flower wreath in his left hand, an incense burner is held by him in his right hand. That the figure is royal is proved by the presence of a long sword near his hip. The robe seems to be typical Persian. The long coat is held by means of an ornamental waist band. The typical Persian shoes, accompanied by the dress and headgear reveals the Shahi dress of Gilgit which was much influenced by the Sassanian tradition. One is tempted to identify this figure as Shahi King Vikramadityanandin, whose name appears frequently in the Gilgit Manuscripts and who must have consecrated these painted manuscripts. His identity is also supported by the bronze status inscribed with the name and figure of the king⁴⁶. The queen is also seated while engaged in her offerings along with her husband. She is robed in an identical attire and embellished with royal jewellery which includes an ear ornament fixed at the cartilage. The coiffeur does not completely hide her hair which is gathered up in a knot at the back. With both of her hands she is offering a scarf, the presentation of which to a distinguished guest is still practised in Ladakh and is known as *Khatak*. A yellow scarf bearing white design is suspended on her shoulders. The background of the panel is also coloured blue and is filled with flowers of various colours reminding us Qizil and Kucha paintings of 7th century A.D. The female donor may stand for the chief queen Parmadevi Tarakmshika, wife of the Shahi King Vikramadityanandin, to whom a reference is made in the Gilgit Manuscript as well⁴⁷.

No natural barriers of high mountain ramparts seem to have prevented contacts of different communities in the past

and nowhere has there been more complex fusion than in North West India and in Central Asia. Gilgit lying on one such route to Central Asia occupied a key position in the continuity of various art traditions for which there is much historical and archaeological evidence. A few examples surviving of early paintings on wooden covers are evidence that the artists ingenuity must have been extensive and assimilative of various art techniques. The different techniques employed at Gilgit is further evidence of previous prolonged evolution of art. That the Gandhara influences must have travelled here is quite obvious even before the dispersal of painters in the wake of the Huns' devastation. The Ajanta technique must have been adopted much earlier. Bamiyan, Fondukistan, Hadda, etc., being very important centres of art contributed equally to the enrichment of this technique in Western Himalayas. The donations of pilgrims on their way to visit famous Buddhist sites along favourable trade routes and the desire to accumulate religious merit provided for the services of roving painters. It was not unusual for the donor, by arrangement with the painter, to be represented in the painting in a suitably devout pose and drawn to a becoming scale in their local costumes. During the 7th century A.D. Indian art had become a complex fusion of Ajanta, Gandhara, Gupta and Central Asian art techniques. This is clearly indicated by the varied styles combined with local style. The Ajanta influence had penetrated to Chinese Turkestan on one side and Western Turkestan on the other and had itself been considerably influenced by the Persian art. The seventh century A.D. is thus a watershed in the history of Indian art when various elements combined together, as a resultant of free exchange of goods, wayfarers and pilgrims on their way to famous Buddhist shrines. These influences can be discerned in the domain of the present miniature paintings. The Gilgit painter worked in tempera media as one notices in the Ajanta and Central Asian paintings, accommodating huge compositions on small wooden tablets. Through these protable objects, the style of Indian art must have proliferated to Central Asia and

vice versa. It was easier to carry portable object of art through which massive murals otherwise impossible to be transported reached different monasteries in Eastern and Western Central Asia.

We notice certain distinctive features of paintings on these wooden covers which set apart one painting from the other. A close study of the first two covers of manuscripts reveal that they are modelled more on Khotanese pattern and bear close resemblance to Bazelik shrine in Chinese Turkestan, showing varying degree of skill in drawing. The presence of the *sun* and *moon* is known not only in Central Asia but also in Kashmir where the *Stupas* are surmounted by this motif. The eighth century A.D. Devsar prabhavali reflects this tendency in Brahmanical art well. The pearl strings in the first two covers are also found in the Adzhina Tapa murals and the drawing of the nose, eyes and lips is typical of Adzhina Tapa style⁴⁹. It is clear that the different currents were responsible for making these drawings. The technique of Adzhina Tapa and Chinese Turkestan was not the work of one artist alone. Another characteristic feature of these paintings is the streamers fitted to the parasols, so very common in Central Asia. These are usually confronted in Kashmir art and Bazalik paintings. In view of their similarity these covers seem to date back to the 7th century A.D. on the basis of the contemporaneous art style and palaeographical evidence.

The painted covers of the second manuscript reveal the typical Ajanta style and also show some influence from Central Asia. The two Buddha images bear close resemblance to the Damoke mural of Chinese Turkestan. The rhythmic sensation in composition, the drawing of second eye out of profile, the three dimensional effects of contours obtained by shaded area, clearly suggest that the artist was quite familiar with the Ajanta art technique with a pronounced bias towards Central Asian style. It is interesting to note that the short loin cloth, otherwise unsuitable to the local dress of Gilgit, bears a profound influence from Ajanta⁵⁰. On the basis of physiognomy

of the two *Bodhisattva* figures and their resemblance to Ajanta and Farhad-Beg-Yailaki, these may also date to the 7th century A.D.

The two paintings of the third manuscript belong to an altogether different style that was contemporaneous with other styles in Western Himalayas. The drawing is more accurate bearing contrasting colour and depicting well proportioned human and celestial figures⁵¹. The presence of the king and queen in front of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Maitreya* and the absence of the Buddha in it deserves our careful attention. It is interesting that while Buddhist triad in plastic art was very common in the eighth century in Kashmir, we don't come across the same composition in any of Gilgit tradition⁵². It seems that the triad was never worshipped collectively at Gilgit. A new tendency of worshipping *Avalokiteshvara* and *Maitreya* seems to have developed, possibly because of the malevolent influence of nature and prevalence of snake bites and other unforeseen calamities. The frequent occurrence of *Avalokiteshvara* in the miniature paintings as also on rocks accounts for the beliefs and fears of the people, inhabiting the most inhospitable regions of the Western Himalayas. Lying on high altitudes, the routes and passes leading there to, were exposed to most terrible hazards of snake-bites, land slides and robbers⁵³. Seeking safety and warding off perils on such desolate tracks was most imperative even for a daring caravan-serai. These fears were echoed in the sacred texts like *Aryadharama* described above and were sought to be warded off by means of amulets etc. But the most effective armour used was the common worship of *Avalokiteshvara* and *Maitreya*, whose figures are so commonly found in Western Himalayas⁵⁴. This seems to establish the early art history of the whole area, bearing out how most of such paintings and sculptures have been lost with the passage of time. The paintings on the third cover, however, display a very strong Sassanian influence so far as their coiffeur, ornamentation, costumes, etc. are concerned⁵⁵. On the basis of this, these

covers also appear to be contemporaneous with the four wooden covers described earlier.

The Gilgit paintings reveal certain interesting facts. There is considerable internal evidence in these paintings in favour of the possibility that the manuscript along with painted covers were consecrated by Shahi king and queen who were Dards and of whom there are at least references of four kings. Under their patronage with generous donations, the paintings were executed by the master artists, long after the Indian art had ceased to receive patronage in other parts of India, Dard rulers in Western Himalayas, by their liberal attitude patronized the artists who could so faithfully render Buddhist themes in all possible Indian and Central Asian techniques, being perhaps strongly influenced by contacts. The date of these painted covers (7th century A.D.) takes us to the reign of the kings preceding Lalitaditya (8th century A.D.). The Shahis were ruling over the region round about *Udabhandapura* upto Gilgit and were occasionally coming into conflict with the kings of Kashmir ultimately succumbing to Lalitaditya in the middle of the 8th century A.D.. The recent discoveries at Chilas, and other places in North Western Himalayas, contemporaneous with Gilgit paintings also deserve our attention as some figures are robed in a similar fashion. It is relevant, therefore, that these rock sculptures alongwith Gilgit paintings are restudied in proper perspective. Such a study clearly highlights the route through which Indian traditions had moved to the outer world to Central Asia and how an integrated development took place combining the elements of various art traditions. The study becomes all the more important bearing in mind how in Indian painting a link is visible in the 10th/11th century A.D. Pala manuscript painting that seems to have been influenced by Ajanta and Gilgit paintings. This could perhaps reveal the main threads in the continuity of Ajanta art in the north through Gilgit following the devastation caused by the in-roads of the Huns.

References

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2. J.L. Bhan : Cultural Heritage—A Unifying Factor, paper presented at the International Asian Relations Commemorative Conference. Oct. 2 to Oct. 5, 1987, New Delhi.
3. (i) *Ajanta*—Vol. I, II.
(ii) Mario Bassagli—*Central Asian Paintings*.
(iii) Sheila L. Weiner—*Ajanta and its place in Buddhist art*.
(iv) D.B. Dhamapala—*Buddhist Paintings from Shrines and Temples in Ceylon*, Italy, 1964.
(v) C. Sivaramamurti—*Indian Paintings*, Delhi, 1970.
4. B.A. Litvinsky and T.I. Zeymal *Adhizna Tapa*, Moscow, 1970.
A. Isakov—*Ancient Panjikent*, Dushenbe, 1982, F.H. Andrews—*Wall Paintings from ancient Shrines in Central Asia*, Delhi, 1983.
5. (i) David Snellgrove—*The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, London, Vol. I, 1977, Vol. II, 1980.
(ii) A.H. Dani—*Chilas: The City of Nanga Parvat*, Islamabad, 1983.
(iii) Deborah E. Klimburg Salter—*The Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, USA, 1982.
6. A large number of Mss. besides minor antiquities were excavated at Naupur in Gilgit in the year 1931 and 1938. Three Mss. with painted covers now form a part of priceless collection of Central Asian Museum, CCAS. University of Kashmir.
7. The structural character of the *Stupa* at Gilgit and the filling up of a domed chamber with Mss., clay models, *Stupas* etc. exactly corresponds to what is shown by Buddhist ruins of some stupas dating from early mediaeval times in Chinese Turkestan and Western China. The practice of placing large deposits of sacred texts and other votive offerings in the interior of a stupa is curiously illustrated by one of the Buddhist paintings on silk recovered by Sir Aurel Stein during his second Central Asian expedition from the Cave Shrines of the Thousand Buddhas at Dunhuang. This is also eloquently exhibited by a large number of votive stupas of clay with long handles found at Gilgit along with the Mss. with painted covers and are preserved in the S.P.S. Museum, Srinagar. A few of them broken into two parts show that even small clay votive stupas were filled with amulets of birch bark and clay tablets bearing Buddhist prayers. At least three shapes of stupas can be identified from the available votive stupas which indicate that they were widely popular in Gilgit and its adjoining areas duly 7th/8th century. Interestingly a shape of one stupa exactly corresponds to the shape of the stupa in vogue in ancient Kashmir as revealed by Harwan and other plaques found in Kashmir.
8. The discovery of these Mss. was first announced by Sir Aurel Stein in the *Statesman* of the 24th July 1931. Subsequently Stein published an article under the title "Archaeological Discoveries in the Hindu Kush", 1931, p. 863. *Journal of the Royal Society of Great Britain and Ireland*.
9. Alberuni eloquently records the use of *Bhurja* or birch for writing purposes. The birch book or *Pothi*, writes Alberuni, was wrapped in a piece of cloth and fastened between two wooden panels of the same size and this description

- exactly corresponds to our Mss. with painted covers. See Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, London, p. 171.
10. The *Sanghatastura* had a great appeal for the pious Buddhists. It mainly expounds in two dialogues of the Buddha with the *Bodhisattavas*—*Sarvasura* and *Bhaisasyasura*, the different ways of acquiring religious merit (*Punya*) in a simple language without slightest touch of philosophy. Thus besides its importance for the study of the Khotanese language, it throws an interesting light on Buddhist society in Gilgit and Khotan during 7th century A.D.
 11. (i) The major portion of the text *Aryadharma* is devoted to the glorification of accepting the Buddhist faith and describe some *Jataka* tales of the Buddha and merits of hearing, writing and preserving the Buddhist scriptures especially those of the *Mahayana*.
(ii) P. Pal in his book "*Buddhists Book Illuminations*" refers only to two sets of covers (see his captions to photos 286, 287, 288 and 289).
 12. Willow and apricot trees are abundantly found in Ladakh and Gilgit and both the type of wood have been used for the painted covers.
 13. Gilgit was connected to Chinese Turkestan via Nagar, Hunza, to Yarkand and China, while Badakshan was connected via Chitral.
 14. The four *stupas* marked as D-C-B-A lined in a row at Naupur, Gilgit were excavated in the year 1938 by Sh. M.S. Koul. It was stupa "C" that exposed beside other items, the three Mss. with painted wooden covers at a depth ranging from seven to eight feet. See M.S. Koul's excavation report in *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. 30, 1939, p. 1-12. These Mss. and other antiquities excavated from the stupa "C" are preserved in SPS Museum Srinagar, Central Asian Museum, Kashmir University, Srinagar, New Delhi, London, Pakistan, Poona & Ujjain.
 15. The *Aryadharma* Mss. is the only palm leaf Mss. so far found in Gilgit. Accordingly to Pal (see page 43, "*Buddhist Book Illumination*", P. Pal & Julia Mecch. Pekarik, no Mss covers either from India, Nepal & Tibet have yet been found that have vertically oriented compositions which makes our present covers earliest so far known in horizontal composition.
 16. *Cintamani* wish granting gem, is a symbol which satisfies all desires. The gem is sometimes represented in the form of small round object and sometimes in the shape of a flame. It is a special symbol of *Samatabhadra*, *Ratnapani*, *Ratanasambhava*, *Mahakala*. *Avalokiteswara* also holds this. It seems that the painter has also given jewel to Buddha as well.

In the *Guhya-Samaja*, it is said the five *Kulas* (families) are the *Dvesa* (Hatred), *Moha* (delusion), *Raga* (attachment), *Cintamani* (Wishing Gem) and *Samaya* (convention) which lead to the attainment of all desires and emancipation. See Bhattacharya D.C. *The Iconography of Buddhist Images*, p. 32.

Deborah Klimburg Salter is also unable to identify the object held by Buddha. The object has been identified by her as leaf which is a symbol of healing Buddha and on the basis of this she has identified this figure as *Baisajyaguru*, the Healing Buddha. See D. Klimburg's—"Notes on two Gilgit Mss Cover Paintings", *Art of Ajanta*-Ed. Parimoo, p. 523.

17. The concept of *sun* and *moon* is found in the local text of *Nilamata Purana* of the 7th century A.D. See also Manifestations of Vishnu, J.L. Bhan, published in *Vaishnavism in Indian Art and Culture*, Delhi, 1986. (Ed.) Rattan Parimoo,

- p. 385-386. Dr. B.N. Mukerjee states that a garland suspends from the Parasol. See *Earliest Indian Miniatures*, B.N. Mukerjee, 1992, p. 32.
18. Dr. P. Banerjee identifies the donor figure holding a lotus in place of a censer (see *painted wooden covers of two Gilgit Mss. in the SPS Museum*, published in *Oriental Art*, Vol. 14, 1968. Dr. B.N. Mukerjee, however identifies them as a sword and shield. See his book on *Earliest Indian Miniatures*, p. 32. A lady elegantly holds an identical basket in her raised left hand on a Harwan tile, dated 2nd/3rd century A.D. (see *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, R.C. Kak, Delhi, rep. 1971, pls.). Surprisingly we find this type of basket in willow still in vogue in Kashmir.
 19. Soon after Buddha's *Nirvana*, his followers evolved the three "Jewels" which form the basic profession of faith of Buddhism. The *Dharma*, *Buddha*, and the *Sangha* or the law, the Buddha and the community. When represented in art as Divinity, *Dharma* shows the *Anjali pose*. *Buddha* shown either in the *Samadhi* or *Bhumispar Samudra* and *Sangha* shown in the *Dharmachakra Mudra*. (See *Vastu Sasira*, Vol. II, D.N. Shukla, Gorakhpur, 1985, p. 36).
 20. The Buddha figures painted on the wooden panels from Damoko in Chinese Turkestan and mural paintings of Adzhina tepa in Soviet Central Asia show similar eye brows. See F.A. Andrews op. cit. pl. XII, DK, DIO 2 and B.A. Litvinsky and T.I. Zeymal op. cit. This is also observed in Ajanta paintings of 6th/7th century A.D. See "*Buddha—A pictorial history of his life and legacy*", J. Auboyer, New Delhi, 1983-pls. 1 and 28. Kalhana (Raj. VII, v, 928-931) describes eloquently how the ladies of King Harsa of Kashmir (A.D. 1089-1101) used to join the corners of their eyes with their ears by a line drawn with collyrium into ends of their locks which were not veiled. While on visit to Central Asia, the author observed Tajik women with their eyebrows joined together with collyrium, which they consider a sign of beauty.
 21. B.A. Litvinsky and T.I. Zuyamol op. cit, p. 234.
 22. *Ibid*.
 23. The crown seems to be in vogue in N.W. Himalayas as is evident from a stylised form of this type of crown given to a bronze image of *Avalokitesvara*, 10th century A.D. from Kashmir in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Nasli and Heeramanek. See *The Arts of India and Nepal, The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek collection*. Boston, 1966. Similar crown appears on *Lokanatha* image from, Mahoba, See *Oriental Art*, Vol. XIV 1968, p. 114.
 24. This figure is identical in many details to the Ivory *Avalokitesvara* (8th century A.D.) from Kashmir preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. See Moti Chandra, *Ancient Indian Ivories*, Bulletin of Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, No. 6. (1957-59). Pal identifies this figure as well on other cover as *Padmapani* or *Avalokitesvara* (see *Buddhist Book Illuminations*, Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Mecch-Pararik, p. 41).
 25. F.H. Andrews—*Innermost Asia*, Delhi, p. 19.
 26. The author during his visit to Central Asia came across with a few wall paintings from Afrasiab showing some ladies moving in procession and bearing a *Tilak* mark on their foreheads. Preserved in the Museum of History and Culture of Uzbekistan in Samarkand.
 27. The Mulbeck rock image of *Maitreya* (8th century A.D.) shows similar knee caps. See J.L. Bhan, *Archaeological Treasures of Ladakh, Research Biannual* vol. 1 no. 2 — Srinagar, 1975.

28. A bronze image of *Padmapani* (7th/8th century A.D.) found at Afghanistan wears an identical short *Dhoti*. See Deborah E. Klimburg Salter, op. cit. fig. 13, p. 97 comparable to the dress given to various figures painted on Ajanta, cave No. XVII, dating to mid. 6th century A.D. See Philip. S. Rawson, *Indian Painting*, New York, 1961, p. 28. This dress is seen on *Sheeri Vasudeva* (SPS Museum), on a plaque (terracotta) from Ahichhatra, 4th-5th cent A.D. in National Museum Delhi (Acc. 62-247) and Transcendent Buddha (a painted panel 7th A.D. from Farhad Beg Yailaki, Kotan). It is also found on *Vairochana* painted panel from Dandan Olik, See *The Arts of Ajanta*, Dr. R. Parimoo, p. 29.
29. Circular lines or disc on the chest can be observed on a seated image of Buddha from Fondukistan and also appear on a few images found at Tajikistan in Soviet Central Asia. See Douglas Barrett, "Persian Paintings", *Marg*, 1977 and *Antiquities of Tajikistan*, Moscow.
30. Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* makes constant reference to *Darada* or *Daradesha*. Dards are believed to be the decedents of pure Aryan race and inhabit the N.W. province including Gilgit, Nagar, Hunza, Gurez and Ladakh. still preserving some ancient customs. An inscription recently found at Chilas records that the Maharaja of the Darada was the overlord in the Indus Valley. See *Pakistan Archaeology*, (Ed.) Ishan H. Nadiem, No. (10 to 22), 1974-1986, Karachi, p. 194.
31. The worship of *Maitreya* was especially strong in Kashmir among *Survastivadin* sect (see Demiville, *Bulletin de l' Ecole*). The presence of large number of *Maitreya* images on rocks at Dras, Mulbeck, Sankho, Chilas etc. should not therefore surprise us. See David Snellgorve op. cit. vol. II and A.H. Dani op. cit.
32. P. Banerjee identifies this figure as *Avalokiteshvara Lokeshvara* with his left hand placed on his left hip. He has probably missed to see a long necked vessel in his left hand, an important attribute of *Maitreya*. See *Oriental Art*— op. cit.
33. Circular *Kundalus* appear frequently on Harwan tiles dating 2nd/3rd century A.D. (see R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* Delhi, rep. 1971, pls.) and continue till 8th/9th century A.D.
34. Hiuen Tsang records that it was through *Madhyantika's* magic that the artist visited *Tushita* Heaven three times to conceptualise the figure of *Maitreya* before carving the image. See *Hiuen Tsang Travels*.
35. The tendency of showing three Buddha figures in a row is also found on a 10th century bronze image of Pala period in the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Nasli and Heermaneck. See the *Evolution of the Buddha Image*, Benjamin Rowland Jr. 1963, p. 58 p. 19. A number of images depict this theme is Kashmir where it is represented by a figure of *Buddha* in the centre flanked by a Stupa on either side as can be observed from JDR famous bronze figure, the Zainpur Buddha, in SPS Museum, Srinagar.
36. The various Buddhists figures painted above doorway of cave no. 32 at Dunhaung include Buddha robed in red monastic *Sanghati* with blue border. See Annettee Juliano, *Treasures of China*, London, 1981 p. 136.
37. F.H. Andrews.
38. Francis Brunel in his *Splendour of Indian Miniatures*, New York, identifies them as Buddha teaching the doctrine of *Dharma* with two attendants. See illus. I. of *Splendour of Indian Miniatures*.
39. It looks as border of a trouser.

40. A terracotta plaque recently found at Wontbawan near Hawal in Srinagar by Mr. Akhtar Mohi-ud-din shows *Avalokiteshvara* seated in *Lalitasana* holding a lotus stalk in his left hand, on which his spiritual father *Amitabha* is seated. The plaque bears a few *Sharada* letters and on the paleographical ground dates probably to 7th century A.D. This is the only image so far found in the Valley showing this theme in Kashmir art. See J.L. Bhan, *Kashmir Sculpture—a Brief Survey*, page 75, Souvenir, Post-graduate Deptt. Zoology, Kashmir University, September, 1989. A beautiful bronze image found by Stein in Chinese Central Asia (Yokhtan) and preserved in the Central Asian Museum, University of Kashmir, shows *Avalokiteshvara* seated in *Lalitasana* and holding a lotus in his right hand (an unusual trait) on which *Amitabha* is seated.
41. While documenting antiquities in Ladakh region, the author saw many figures of *Padmasamtha*, all figures with a Lamayist cap. Nowhere he is shown as *Buddha*, the figure therefore and the identification of Dr. Mukerjee is doubtful. See his *Earliest Indian Miniatures*, p. 37.
42. Aurel Stein—*Innermost Asia*—Delhi, 1981, 01. LXXXVI. A fragment of Bazalik wall painting shows a devotee seated in *Padmasana* in an identical manner. See Aurel Stein—op. cit. BEZ. IMN. Crowns held by ribbons were in vogue in Kashmir during 6th century A.D. and continued till 8th century A.D. Sculptures from Bijbehara and Parihaspur preserved in SPS Museum Srinagar bear testimony to it.
43. Dr. B.N. Mukerjee states that the hand is held in *Abhaya mudra*, but he has forgotten to see *Akhshamala* or Rosary, see his book on *Earliest Indian Miniatures*, p. 36.
44. The image of *Sadashiva* (5th century A.D.), Baramulla, Kashmir, shows similar ear ornament fitted near the ear cartilage. The use of this ornament ceases after 7th century A.D. in Kashmir.
45. A bronze image of Buddha from Kashmir bears an inscription of King Nandi Vikramaditya recording that the image was consecrated by *Maharajadhiraja Parosvara Patoli—Shahi*..... the illustrious *Nandi Vikramadityanandi Deva* who is identified in the Hatun inscription. The donor king shown near the base of image is robed in Scythian dress. See P. Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, Austria, 1975, pl. 31, p. 108.
46. The hair style seems to be prevalent in ancient Kashmir as is represented by Harwan tiles of 2nd/3rd century A.D. See R.C. Kak. Op. cit. Plates.
47. Purnima Koul, *Inscription and Coins of the Hindu Shahi Dynasty of Kabul and Gandhara —A Historical Study* (unpublished dissertation), CCAS, Kashmir University, 1983, p. 73.
48. Manifestations of Vishnu : J.L. Bhan, published in *Vaishnavism in Indian Arts and Culture* —(Ed.) R. Parimo, Delhi, 1976.
49. B.A. Litvinsky and T.I. Zeymal, op. cit.
50. A wall painting from Bezelik shrine (Chinese Central Asia) shows two streamers fixed on top of a stupa. Putting streamers atop stupas in ancient Kashmir is very well represented by terracottas from Harwan, JDR famous bronze image, Zainapur Buddha image etc. The practice of putting coloured streamers atop monasteries and stupas continues till date in Western Himalayas, including Ladakh.
51. Phillip S. Rawson. *Indian Painting*, New York, 1961, Ills. 7 & 29.
52. According to Shukla (*Vastu Shastra*, Vol. II Gorakpur, 1985 p. 36) Nepalese Buddhists were the first to conceive the holy triad in human form. The available

sculptures show that the Buddhist triad was represented on Kashmir art from 8th century A.D. onwards. Two beautiful red stone sculptures showing this theme were procured by the National Museum, New Delhi, from Late Ibn Mahjoor in 1980. The author while documenting art relics in the valley located a block of stone lying near a trunk of a huge tree at Raithan, Badgam, Kashmir which eloquently depicts how the master sculptor of Kashmir has succeeded in representing this Buddhist theme both in an aniconic and iconic forms. In the lower register it represents Buddha standing and flanked by *Maitreya* and *Avalokiteshvara*, both seated under trefoil arches. In the upper register, above the trefoil arches—are three stupas probably indicating the triad in an aniconic form as well. The manifestation of Buddhist Triad is very well brought out by Coomaraswamy, who refers to the earliest Buddhist triad represented by a *Bodhi* tree supported by two *Yakshas* see, Coomaraswamy, "*Yakshas*", New Delhi, 1971, p. 30. The triad of a Buddha between two *Bodhisattvas* was to persist for a long time in Buddhist Iconography. It appears at a very early stage in Afganistan and we find it on the southern caravan route in the Khotan while it seems to have been less popular on the northern route.

53. Deborah E. Klimburg—op. cit.
54. A large number of birch bark amulets found at Gilgit during excavation of the four Stupas at Naupur in 1931, are preserved in the SPS Museum, Srinagar.
55. The Sassanian influences had already influenced N.W. province as noticed at bamiyan (5th century A.D.) and Kashmir (6th century A.D.). These influences continued till 10th century A.D. in Kashmir as is reflected by various images including the famous *Surya* image of Kashmir in the Cleaveland Museum, USA. the *Shashthi* panel in the National Museum, New Delhi, New Delhi and Parihaspura sculptures preserved in the SPS Museum, Srinagar.

Chapter 6

MAHESHMURTI CIRCA 625 A.D. AKHNUR, HEIGHT 78 cms (DOGRA ART MUSEUM) JAMMU MAHESHMURTI/SADASIVA

V.N. DRABU

Akhnur, due to its favourable position for trade (located on the Chenab) must have been a prosperous centre in ancient times and one of the principal towns of Mirpur Khas (now under the illegal occupation of Pakistan). A number of Hindu sculptures, carved in the round, survive from this area and share several distinctive features which would suggest the existence of an important but short-lived school of sculpture. Although related in some respects to the earlier schools of Vijbror and Varahamula, it is not only closely tied to the post- Gandhāra tradition of the north-west but also shares the Gupta idiom of art. This is evident both from the numerous Hindu images of stone sculpture and Buddhist terracotta heads found in the region. Akhnur thus seems to have been a part of a generalized style which extended as far as Punjab and Sindh on the one hand and to Varahmul, situated in the western extremity of the Kashmir Valley on the other, absorbing many features of late Gupta Art.

The most impressive example of this school is an endorsed image of Maheshvara/Sadāśiva of grey granite. The principal image is three-headed framed by no less smaller heads of *Aghora* (*Bhairava*) and *Vāmā* (*Umā*). This image is very

well modelled and stands in a strictly frontal position, slightly flexed. The treatment is less linear than what we observe in the Vijabror icons of the same period, with swelling volume in the chest, stomach and thighs. The snake-rolled *upavita* or sacred thread runs over the left arm, falls further down the body and reaches below the navel on the right side. The imbricated floral garland (*Vanamālā*) which loops in front of the body, covering almost the entire frame of the image from its shoulders down to the ankles is more closely associated with Gupta Vishnu images than with those garlands that do appear in Gandhāra. Most of the Hindu deities from Kashmir like *Kārttikeya* and *Vishnu*, in particular, are seen wearing it and this may be noted as one of the strong features of Kashmiri art. The right thigh of the deity is shown wearing a tiger skin. The principal figure is draped in a transparent short *dhoti* which has a series of dense pleats falling between the legs and which reaches his ankles, a feature most common in the early art of Kashmir. The *dhoti* and the belt of *Sadāśiva* or *Maheshwara* are closer to the Gupta repertoire than to the typical north-west type. The garment is held fast to the waist by means of a belt, the ends falling over the right and left thigh. The restrained use of jewellery in the bust is not customary with the *Bodhisattva* images of the North West, and this fact rules out the possibility of its being one. The jewellery is of simple form. The image wears two necklaces—a beaded one and a twisted double string pearl-necklace. This may ultimately derive from the practice of a single necklace which is more typical of Gupta sculpture rather than a series of necklaces as commonly observed in the Gandhāra *Bodhisattvas*. Instead of the bold ornamentation, the restrained tone of jewellery is significant. It shows how in some stone sculptures Gandhāra elements were modified in favour of a new plastic vocabulary. As all the four arms are badly broken, all that one can make out is that the right arm has a simple pearl, bordered arm-band, a similar ornament which must have been worn on the missing left arm as well.

Development of the individual iconographic types is seldom discussed by Rao¹. To show this development would mean a critical study of the extant reliefs and single sculptures of the Gupta, Kushāṇa and pre-Kuṣāṇa periods, which is outside the purview of this paper. We, however, know of Śiva's *pañcakṛtya* destruction (*saṁhāra* or *pralaya*), creation or manifestation (*Sṛṣṭi*), preservation (*sthiti*), conferment of grace (*Anugraha*) and obscuration (*Tirobhāva*). This is in one way or other represented in plastic art. We come across many epithets in the *Mahābhārata* which mention more than one thousand names of Śiva². The epic or *Paurāṇic Śiva* had his Vedic and pre-Vedic counterparts or prototypes. *Rudra* was the Vedic counterpart of Śiva³, whose glories are extolled in the "*Śvetaśvattara Upaniṣad*". We find *Rudra* rising to the position of a Supreme God as the *Athervaveda* assigns various epithets to him such as *Bhava*, *Śarva*, *Paśupati*, *Ugra*, *Mahādeva*, and *Īśāna*. The *Śatapatha* and *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas* add one more name to the list. The addition of *Aśani* to the list makes their number eight (inclusive of *Rudra*), each five of which typify his two aspects of *Ghōra* (terrific), and *Saumya* (peaceful). Thus *Rudra*, *Śarva*, *Ugra* and *Aśani* characterize his destructive aspect while *Bhava*, *Paśupati*, *Mahādeva* and *Īśāna* his beneficent one. The *Paurāṇic Śiva's* beneficent nature is well expressed in the *Śatarudrīya* which also contains epithets descriptive of the dark and fierce aspects of the God.

Śiva's representation in his two, four, or multi-armed human forms, occasionally show more than one head. These images can be classified under two broad heads, those depicting his terrific (*Ugra* or *Ghōra*) aspect and the other illustrating his peaceful (*Saumya* or *Śānta*) aspect. The central face here represents his *Saumya* aspect while the face to its right depicts his *Ghōra* aspect. These two faces find a close parallel in the colossal *Maheśamūrti* from Pāndrethan⁴ assignable to the first half of the seventh century. Both the images illustrate the characteristic facial type with fleshy pouting lips and sharply lidded eyes. The images of the *Ghōra* or *Ugra* form are also

called *Bhairava*, *Aghora*, *Raudra*, *Pāśupata*, *Vīrabhadra* etc. The *Aghora* face here looks very ferocious. The upward protruding fangs, staring eyes and the tensely arched eyebrows and the expanding nostrils spit fire the flames of which may be seen rising in the *Jaṭās* (matted locks⁵). The third vertical eye intensifies the effect of the process of destruction. The bearded and moustached *Aghora*'s countenance and the large ear-rings that he wears add to the over-all picture of destruction. He is bedecked with relatively simple ornaments. The appearance of a raised hand in the midst of flaming *Jaṭās* looks rather mysterious. It may perhaps signify reassurance (*Abhaya*) to the terror-stricken of regeneration after the process of destruction is complete.

The central face represents the benevolent (*Saumya*) aspect of Śiva and comes close to the central face of the Fategarh image which does not wear a crown. It stands in sharp contrast to the *Aghora* face of the Lord. While the *Aghora* face threatens disaster, exhibiting a terrible countenance and attitude, the *Saumya* aspect represents benevolence, which answers prayers, grants wishes and bestows security and peace. Śiva looks dignified in his *Yogamudra*. He is represented as a figure of great majesty, supple, young and calm. The Divine Śiva, in the act of manifesting Himself has been rendered with consummate ease and a masterly understanding of the nuance of the theme. The suggestive subtle emotions of the face and the third vertical eye leave an unforgettable impression and so overwhelming is the aesthetic impact that even the mutilated condition of the image does not detract from its intense impact. The head of the central face wears a three-peaked crown studded with pearls and gems as is commonly met with in most of the Kārkoṭa images from Parihāspura. The locks of hair fall gracefully on the shoulders of the Lord. The treatment of the hair with curls beneath the crown can be seen in the early Viṣṇu images from Varāhmul and Vijbror. A standard treatment of the male and female (*Vāmā*'s) coiffure finds a striking resemblance with most of the Kārkoṭa period images.

The three-peaked crown and the gliding smoothness of the body contours leaves little doubt about its date sometime in the first half of the seventh century. Both in *Vāmā's* hair-do, and in her consort's chignon, there is hardly anything recognized by Gandhāran here either in feature or in feeling.

The face to the left of *Śiva* is that of *Vāmā*, the embodied form of his *Ichhā Śakti* which, together with his *Jñāna* and *Kriyā Śakti*, manifests itself in cosmic *Brahmāṇḍa*. *Vāmā* thus progenerates the universe with its thirty-six *tattvas* (elements) from the *Śakti Tattva* to *Prithvī Tattva*. In fact, this universe is the expansion of the Supreme Will (*Śakti Visphāra*) through *Mahāmāyā Bhagavati* or *Citsvarūpinī Bhagavati*, a concept in close conformity to the tantric traditions. She is the Universal Mother of both moveable and immoveable objects and the source of light and energy. She is conceived of as the force of gravity in the entire planetary system and solar order that sustains the cosmos and nourishes both the animate and inanimate beings. We have here, in this face, a faithful representation of a Divine Mother, bashful, tender and suffused with emotion. The charming figure of *Vāmā* is a picture of a beautiful young mother, full of grace and benevolence. From its emotional expression and form it is this face that should be considered as *par excellent*, when contrasted with the powerful expression of *Aghora* and dignified countenance of *Saumya*. She wears a pearl-studded crown typical of Kārkoṭa period. Her large ear-rings worn by her add to the feminine grace of *Vāmā*. Her face indicates a transition from the squarish face to an oval one. The treatment of the eye-brows is typical of the Gupta idiom.

The standing *Maheshmūrti* from Akhnur (now in the Dogra Art Museum Jammu) with arms and hands broken off, is one of the finest stone-representations of the deity in India art. It is remarkable both for its power and grace and also for the originality and craftsmanship with which every detail is realized. We find a definite transition in stone sculpture. The face tends to become oval, the body supple, the contours

flowing and the garments are of a fine texture. The artist achieves wonderful mastery and skilfully deals with both volume and space with a touch of perfection. The *Jaṭāmukuta* (mass of the matted locks) beneath the crown and falling on the shoulders of *Śiva*, the male and female coiffure, the treatment of the oval face, the elongated bodily proportions and articulated treatment of the muscles, lower garments, the waist bands, the tassels—all correspond almost closely to the early Kārkoṭa style and there would be little doubt about its date in the first or second quarter of the seventh century. The conceptual greatness, the remarkable execution, the delicacy with which the sculptures of this age are delineated speak of the height to which the artists of the age rose. It would not be an exaggeration to assume that some talented master craftsman from Kashmir sculpted this image, closely following the art traditions of his land or atelier. Lalitāditya's significant victories outside Kashmir, following the break-up of the Gupta empire, brought a band of master artists whose artistic and cultural traditions contributed immensely to the artistic pool of Kashmir, introducing diversity and eclecticism in art tradition. The seventh-eighth century witnesses the rise of some great artistic geniuses and the present image of *Maheshmūrti* seems to be the most outstanding work of such an artist. This is quite evident from the present example of the standing figure of *Śiva* with side faces of *Aghora* and *Vāmā* symbolizing universal parenthood, manifestation and destruction. The three-headed image of *Śiva* with its multiple faces and arms—all are inflections of a single timeless essence, beyond change and event. There is amazing realism both in the delineation of the suppleness and roundity of the thighs and in the treatment of the powerfully built torso. The plasticity of this highly proportioned composition is of such an order that, after a comparative evaluation, we are led to believe that it must have been carved some fifty years from that of *Umā-Maheshwara* and *Maheśamūrti*⁶.

(Photograph Maheshmūrti courtesy Jammu and Kashmir Government, Archaeological Department, Jammu)

V.N. Drabu.

References

1. T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I and II.
2. *Mahābhārata*, XIII, 17.
3. *Vājasameyi Samhitā*, Ch. XVI (we have hundred names of Rudra) in the *Śata rudriya* text of the *Suklayajurveda* of the Vājasaneji School.
4. *Maheshmurti*, Pandrethan, Circa 7th century, (S.P.S.Museum, Srinagar).
5. It may be that the sculptor intended this head to be that of *Agni* as *Śiva* is sometimes called by that name or *Anala* (See *Śvetaśvatara Upamshad*, 6-19, Maheshwara Stutih, Verse 12).
6. On art stylistic analysis *Umā Maheśvara* in the Devibal Shrine in Varahmul may be assigned to second half of the sixth century A.D. *Maheshmūrti* from Fatehgarh in Varāhmul may also be assigned to the second quarter of the 6th Century.

Chapter 7

MONASTERIES OF ALCHI (LADAKH)

H.L. RAINA

The Chinese traveller Fa-Hien referred to Ladakh as Kai-Chha and Hien Sang as Ma-Lo-Pho. During present times, however, it is identified by the name of Ladakh only.

Ladakh was ruled by local *Rajas* and was more or less an independent country during the pre-Islamic rule of Kashmir. It is said to have become integral part of Jammu & Kashmir State in 1842 when Wazir Ratna defeated Tibetans.

The history of Ladakh is stated to start from the reign of Shyed II de-NegmaGon, who came to power and is considered the founder of Lahchen dynasty which ruled over Ladakh upto end of 15th century.

The land is bounded in the north and east by China, in the north-west by Gilgit and Skardu. Doda lies in its west while Punjab and Himachal Pradesh touch its southern borders.

There may be many attractions in Ladakh but Buddhism and Buddhist monasteries are the chief attractions. You may not find any village which does not have a monastery, big or small. These are most conspicuous buildings usually found on the tops of high mountains, spurs or at isolated rocks which are away from the hustle and bustle of the villages and towns. One may find a large number of monasteries in Ladakh but only 12 of them are important and the Alchi monastery is one of them.

About 71 km. down from Leh, the capital of Ladakh, and 42 km up from Khalsi town under the towering snow-clad

mountains of Sumda from one side and the roaring Indus on the other side, there is a solitary and silent village known by the name of Alchi. The road is approachable by a link road across the river Sind about 7 km from the village called Saspol while moving down at the diversion of national highway from Leh to Srinagar.

In this calm and silent village, a small but an impressive complex comprising of five *Gumphas*, some Chortens and Mani walls exist. The names of *Gumphas* from west to east are:

1. Lakhang Suma.
2. Sum Tsek.
3. Dukhang or-Nam-par-Snagmdzad.
4. Lotsawa Lakhang.
5. Manjushri Lakhang.

The history and background behind these *Gumphas* goes back to 900-1000 AD. It is said that the most famous pupil of Kashmiri Buddhist who settled in Ladakh was Iotsawa Rinchan Zenagpo. According to a Tibetan historical work, the Kashmiri monk first settled at Sanid in Zanskar and built a monastery there which is still known by the name of Kanika monastery. After they had finished painting the pictures in this monastery some paint remained with them and they wanted to make use of it and as such decided to build one more monastery at Sumda in Piling. When the paint still continued to remain they once again made use of that remaining paint by using it on the third monastery called Alchi. There is perhaps some record that the fourth monastery built was the Mangguyu monastery at Alchi. One can easily distinguish these monasteries from the rest of the monasteries of Ladakh by door beams and lintels which are very thick and good, ornamented all over with mythological wooden carvings. Of special interest are the galleries. The facade of Sumtsek monastery with its trefoil arches is genuine Kashmir style.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the first Indian Buddhist who went to China around the middle of the first century AD came from Kashmir which was then one of

the chief centres of Buddhist learning. The Fourth Buddhist Conference approximately held during the same period under the auspices of King Kanishka was perhaps held at Harwan, Kashmir. There is also a thinking that the early Buddhists most probably went to China via Gilgit and Chinese also are believed to have returned several times during the eighth century. Gilgit was considered as the gateway to India those days, but due to the Tibetan military invasions and raids this route was supposed to be unsafe. The Chinese emperor Xuanzang (Hsuan Tsang) (713-755 AD) sent a strong contingent of 4000 soldiers under the collector of Kashgar to assist the local king or chief in the occupation of Gilgit.

There is also a legend that King Ashoka established Buddhist colonies in Khotan much earlier in the 3rd century B.C., but it appears that this legend is not supported by any evidence.

The foreign influence on Buddhism remained without any effect here and thus it was considered a living religion. It may be due to Ladakh's remoteness, high passes and inaccessible roads and difficult terrain which helped Buddhism to keep its sway here till it was thrown open to foreign tourists recently. This was only possible after the roads were laid and improvised with the help of modern technology. Their easy accessibility makes the monasteries of Ladakh and Zaskar significant sites for the study of Monastic art. As already explained above that the earliest monasteries are supposed to have been established at Alchi in Ladakh region.

1. *Lakhang Suma*

The Lakhang Suma monastery is located in the western side of the complex. On its front, a local Lama's house overshadows this small mud monastary. The monastery is square in plan and of 6.00' x 6.10' dimensions approximately. The shrine possesses a *Chorten* in its centre. All the four walls inside bear paintings. On the north wall are depicted *Vajerpani*, *Guhya Manjuvajra*, *Kalachakra*, *Maitreya*, *Tara*, *Acyā*

Avaloketshvara, etc; on the western wall *Vajerpani*, on the eastern wall five *Tathagatas* and *Vajradharas* and *Akshobhya*. On the southern wall to the right of the entrance there are two *Bodhisattavas* and a royal figure with an attendant on the left of the entrance showing Buddha preaching. There is horseman and *Mahakala* on the doorway. One must appreciate that the paintings depicted on the walls have still grace and attraction. However at the intersection of floor level and vertical walls the paintings are showing signs of wearing off. Some of the walls also show a little bulging with small cracks. The wall paintings also give the impression of leakage from top. From time to time maintenance has made the roofs watertight. In order to provide strength to the walls especially at the corner junctions, battered buttresses have been provided, which appear to be later additions.

2. *Sum Tsek*

Moving towards the eastern side from Lakhang Suma stands the shrine called Sum Tsek, at about a distance of 8 to 10 meters. The shrine comprises three stories, one surmounting the other. The area of each roof diminishes with the increase of height. The shrine consists of single room containing a *Chorten* in the centre. The room has three projected chambers from east, west and north side. Huge statues of deities have been installed in the chambers. The ground and first floor have verandahs supported by wooden pillars carved in geometrical patterns. The brackets bear the carvings of animals and the beam heads with lion head carvings. The gap between the beams have ornamental mythological wooden carvings bearing trefoil arches. One cannot but note the mastery of the craftsmen of that time. It is said that the most of the craftsmen were from Kashmir. Even the ornamental works have the Kashmiri touch, especially the *jali* and other kinds of ornamentation. The traces of such works can be found in old Kashmiri houses in old Srinagar.

The standing statues are of *Maitreya*, *Avalokteshvara* and *Manjushri*. The shrine faces the south side. Besides noteworthy ornamental woodwork the temple has precious wall paintings which comprise murals of thousand Buddhas in the lower storey. Large paintings of *Vairochana*, eleven headed *Avalokiteshvara*, *Pranjanparmita*. Ten *Mandals* and murals of three fierce protecting divinities in the upper storey.

The wooden ornamented mythological carvings with trefoil arches were in a precarious condition when the author visited the site last in 1984. The pillars were found damaged at the bottom and at the top. The rafters (cross) had come out and the wooden structures appeared to have withstood the time, yet needed immediate attention to keep the structured pieces in its original position. The walls inside also showed small cracks. Even signs of roof leakage were found which were made water tight. The stone butterress of walls appear to be a later addition.

One cannot remain silent after having seen the wonderful work done at the colossal monastery. As already stated above, the painters did not want to throw away the colours which remained with them after using them at Kanika monastery. How wonderfully these colours have been utilized here can only be appreciated when we find the finish and the lustre of paintings still glowing which even the wheel of time has not diminished.

3. *Dukhang or Nam-par-srang-mdzad*

Moving still towards east from Sum-Tsek we come across a shrine known by the name of Kukhang or Nam-par-srag-mdzad. This shrine is divided into two parts, the inner and the outer part. The outer part is partly roofed and partly open from the top. The shrine is rectangular in plan, having two small projections from the eastern side. The outer half of the floor is paved with small pieces of wooden planks which seem to have been added at a later stage. It has painted images of four-headed *Vairochana*, *Amitabha*, *Amoghasidhi*, *Ratnasambhava*, *Akshobhya*, *Maitreya* and *Atisa*. The walls are profusely decorated with *Vajradhatu Mandala* on the western wall of

Dukhang. Inside the *Mandala* is shown an angry manifestation of *Ratna Sambhava*, *Akshobhya*, *Amitabha*, *Amoghsiddhi* and *Locaka Mamaki Pandur Vasini* and Tara on the northern wall. On the right of the main shrine are depicted thousand Buddhas. On the eastern wall to the left of the door is depicted *Prajnaparmita* with Mandla and on the right preaching works.

4. *Lotsava Lakhang*

In close vicinity of Dukhang, moving yet again towards east, there is a complex of two monasteries *Lotsava Lakhang* and *Manjushri* which will be found fenced with rubble stones in mud mortar from three sides. The first shrine of the small complex is that of *Lotsava Lakhkang*.

This monastery can be divided into two parts. The outer verandah has wooden pillars on the front fringe of the raised platforms. All the four pillars on the platform are in a row. The second part consists of a square chamber with a golden statue of *Shakyamuni Buddha* in the centre *Ren-chen-Zangpa Avalokiteshwara*, *Amitabha*, *Mahakala*, *Akshobhya* and *Mandals* of *Avalokiteshwara*. The art objects are fixed.

5. *Manjushri Lakhang*

The shrine is connected with *Lotsava Lakhang* by a common wall. The shrine shares the common compound wall, thus making it a complex of two small shrines. The structure of this shrine is almost similar in construction to that of *Lotsava Lakhang*, only the deities installed being different. This monastery has two diminutive doors for entrance. It is square in plan with a raised platform in the centre of the hall bearing four statues, one on each side. The central statue is supposed to be of *Manjushri* and is made of stucco. All the four walls inside bear paintings. Some of these paintings appear to have been retouched. Probably fresh paintings have been painted over the original ones which may have faded or been damaged.

Minor cracks are visible inside the shrine. The paintings also show leakage of water from above.

Chapter 8

BUDDHIST ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF KASHMIR

ADVAITAVADINI KAUL

In Kashmir the foundations of Buddhist art and architecture were laid in the early Buddhist settlements during the first centuries of the Christian era. The excavated sites of this period at Ushkur near Baramulla and Harwan near Srinagar represent the early phase of the Buddhist art and architecture of Kashmir, betraying the influences of several Central Asian civilizations, viz., Parthian, Greek, Turkish, etc. as well.¹ The next landmark is formed by the art remains of Parihaspura with Buddhist attribution. The following discussion purports to trace in brief the development of Buddhist art and architecture in Kashmir and its spread to in Central Asia, China and Tibet.

For getting an idea of the origin of building art of Buddhist Kashmir, the excavated sites at Ushkur and Harwan, although bare foundations, are of great significance. These are the foundations of the Buddhist *Stupas*, *Chaityas*, and *Viharas*. The foundation of Stupas at both these sites are located at the centre of large surrounding courtyard—the arrangement being similar to the Stupa courts of Gandhara. The foundation of a *Chaitya* at Harwan has its similarities in plan and dimensions with a *Chaitya* unearthed at the Indo-Greek city of Sirkap in Taxila.²

The plan and general arrangement of the early buildings of Kashmir were the modes of their construction from a mixture of mud and pebbles. The process was gradually

improved by the insertion of irregular blocks of stone at intervals. With the passage of time the method was further improved by using large untrimmed stones in construction, the spaces left between being filled up by smaller stones. Such rough construction needed a surface treatment. For this, the use was made of terracotta tiles or panels. It was a great development in the architecture of Kashmir. These tiles were used everywhere to cover the walls and also the pavement of the courtyards. The uniqueness of the tiles is that they are moulded with a design in bas relief. The designs are significant for representing a variety of alien civilizations, reference to which has been already made. It points to the impact of diverse cultures that had met at this place. The Harwan excavations have also yielded a few terracotta plaques.³ These plaques bear in relief miniature Stupas.⁴ In the present context these reliefs are of great significance for they give an idea of the structure of Stupas that were built in Kashmir in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Stupas consisted of three component parts, viz., the base, the drum and the umbrella. The base was composed of three tiers. It was a square structure with stairs in the middle of four sides (*mandala* shape) to reach to the drum of the Stupa which enshrined the relic. It appears that the drum was ornamental as indicated by the terracotta plaques. Above the drum was an umbrella. The umbrella⁵ had thirteen tiers arranged in diminishing size and placed on wooden poles. The thirteen tiers represent the thirteen heavens and it is said that on the thirteenth tier the *Avalokitesvara* resides.

On the top of the Stupa, there were also solar and lunar signs and ribbons which indicate Parthian influence. The tradition of coloured ribbons on the top of monasteries is invariably found in Ladakh even during these days. An interesting point to note among earlier Stupas of Kashmir is the presence of lion capital as indicated by the terracotta plaques from Harwan. It seems that the Stupa encircled by a wall was approachable on four sides. On each side was raised a lion capital. The pattern was the same as seen at Sanchi.

According to H. Goetz, the Harwan excavations represent the local variety of the Indo-Parthian style and that of Ushkur represent earlier Gandhara style.⁶

The Pandrethan (Puranadhisthana) excavation has revealed mounds of two Buddhist Stupas and the courtyard of a monastery.⁷

The glorious period of Kashmir architecture coincided with the rule of the great Karkota ruler, Lalitaditya Muktapida, during 8th century A.D. His empire covered a large part of India and also Eastern Turkistan.⁸ This powerful king dedicated a large Buddhist establishment at Parihaspura, fourteen miles north-west of Srinagar. The excavation at the site has revealed the ruins of a Stupa, a Vihara and a Chaitya-hall. The building art of this site is remarkably different from the earlier building art of Kashmir. These remains depict a decisive leap forward in the materialisation of its architectural ideals. The main feature of these buildings is that they are constructed of immense stones which are smoothly dressed. Their points are exact and perfect. The stones were apparently joined together by gypsum mortar and iron dowels. The largest stone measured 4.2×6 m and formed the floor of the Chaitya.⁹ In fact, these were products of an artistically mature mind pointing to the flourishing state of stone architecture of Kashmir.

The Stupa at Parihaspura attributed to Cankuna, a Tokharian minister of Lalitaditya, occupied a square of 38.5 m side¹⁰ with projecting stairways at the quarters making a cross-shaped design. The Stupa originally had two platforms which provided passages for circumambulation on two levels. The influence of this architecture in its plan and elevation is also reflected by the Brahmanic monumental buildings of Kashmir, viz., Martand, Avantipur etc. etc.

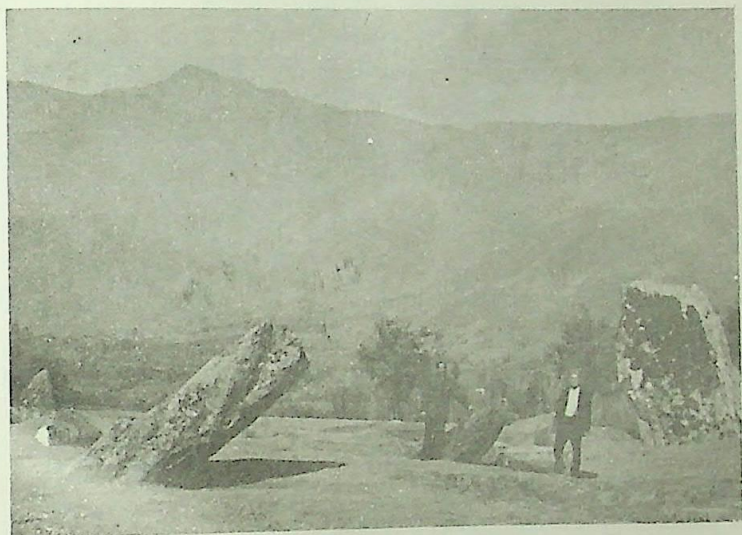
The Parihaspura monastery is the only surviving example of Buddhist monasteries in Kashmir. It was a quadrangle of twenty-six cells enclosing a square courtyard. There was a broad verandah in front of the cells. In the middle of one side i.e. to the east, was the flight of steps. The central cell on this

side served as a vestibule. On the western side was also a flight of steps leading down to the courtyard. On a plinth projected into the courtyard were built three cells which were probably the private apartments of the abbot of the monastery. Nearby in a corner is a large stone which may have served as a water reservoir. There was also a proper drainage system to carry off the surplus water from the courtyard.¹¹

The examples of similar forms of Buddhist architecture can be traced in the monasteries and Stupas of Tibet. Credit goes to the great Tibetan scholar Rin-chen-bzen-po (11th century A.D.) who was mainly responsible for laying the foundation of most of the monasteries and Stupas in western Tibet in collaboration with Kashmiri artists. According to *The Blue Annals*, Ratnavajra (11th century A.D.) a Kashmiri scholar, besides his literary activities also supervised five hundred workers and artisans including sculptors and goldsmiths in rebuilding the circular terrace of Bsam-yas monastery in Central Tibet which was burnt in 986 A.D.¹²

The large *Chorten* (Stupa) at Samde in Tsang region¹³ and the doorway of Sumtsek¹⁴ (Alchi) are magnificent examples of Kashmiri architecture. The figure of Avalokiteshvara in Alchi, (Ladakh), also provides a glimpse of Kashmiri Buddhist architecture. The lower garment of the figure is painted with pictorial art. It depicts various scenes including multi-storyed wooden palaces, Stupas etc. According to Snellgrove, these represent Buddhist sites in Kashmir.¹⁵ Kalhana also makes mention of multi-storyed buildings of Kashmir during the 11th century A.D. The existence of wooden architecture in Kashmir during this period is confirmed by the inscription in *Sharada* script found at Arigom (1197 A.D.) in Kashmir.¹⁶ It records the construction of a brick Vihara at the place, where there was previously a Vihara constructed of wood and which was set to fire by a certain king named Simha.

The great Buddhist movement which spread farther to Central Asian territories started mainly from Kashmir. In the field of architecture Kashmiri artists must have definitely



General view of Neolithic, Megalithic site, Burzahom, Srinagar.



S.P.S Museum, Srinagar.



Avalokitesvara (Buddist Deity) Pandrethan, Kashmir.



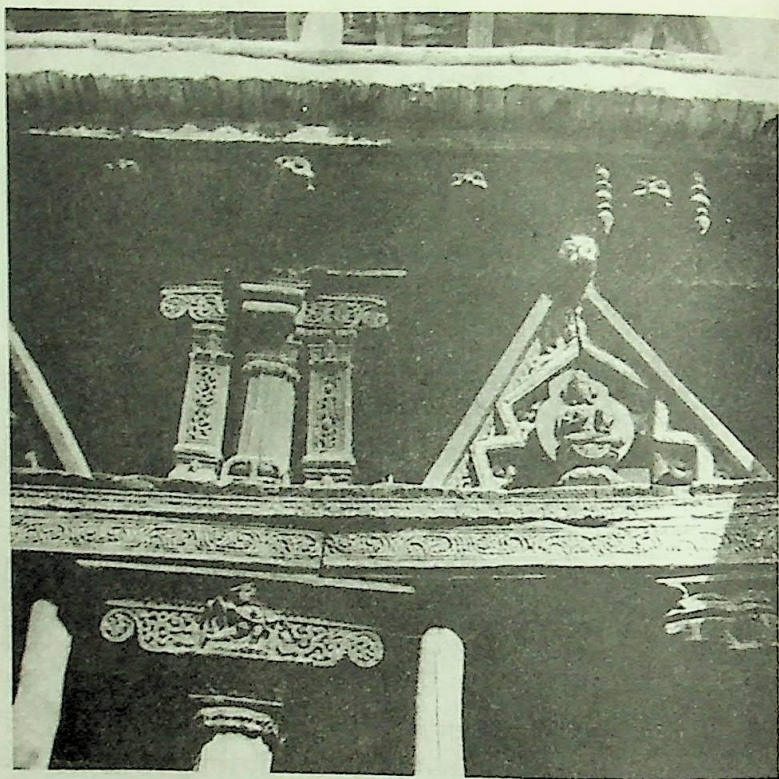
A Kashmiri girl.



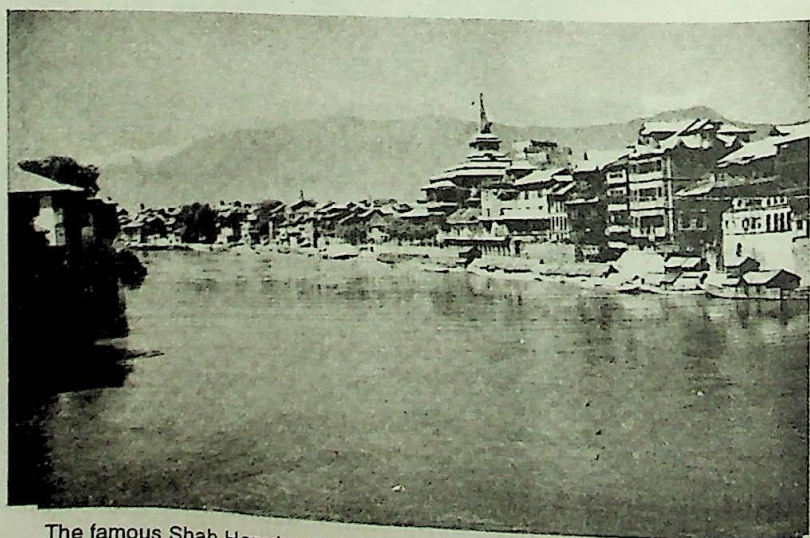
Prof. P.N. Pushp with his wife.



Ruins of Martand (Sun) Temple, Kashmir.



Wooden Trifoil Arch, of Alchi Monastery (Ladakh).



The famous Shah Hamdaan Mosque on the bank of river Jehlum (Srinagar).

received help from outside as far as the technique was concerned. But it was their high ideals which characterise the uniqueness of their work. Again, in the field of architecture local material has played a big part. In the above discussion it has been seen that the material used for building purposes was stone (Parihasapura), wood (Arigom, Alchi) and brick (Arigom). There is no brick building of the Buddhist period in Kashmir that has survived. These buildings were probably demolished and the material was used for the construction of other buildings. However, the evidence of the construction of brick Viharas is recorded on Arigom inscription. In Tibet, particularly in Ladakh, there are a number of examples of wood work accomplished by Kashmiri artists, but there is only the Arigom inscription left to confirm the existence of wooden Viharas in Kashmir. For the stone work use was made of beautiful grey limestone. It was easy to carve on it and it presented a very smooth surface when properly dressed. The main characteristic of Buddhist architecture of Kashmir was the use of better material and the modes of decoration. The examples are still extant in the monasteries and Stupas of Ladakh and Tibet.

Climatic vagaries and geographical location, besides religious and political upheavals, have resulted in the destruction of much of the rich art style of ancient Kashmir. However, outside Kashmir, in the monasteries of Central Asia, China and Tibet, a large number of examples have been traced which bear influences of Kashmiri art style. References to the Kashmir art style can also be found in literary evidences from Kashmir and Tibet.

The *Nilamatapurana* (6th-7th century A.D.) dealing with the sacred places, rituals and ceremonials of Kashmir, refers to decoration of the walls of the *Chaityas* with paintings on the occasion of Buddhas's birthday¹⁷. In his introduction to Kshemendra's *Avadanakalpalata* (11th century A.D.), Somadeva makes mention of the monasteries adorned with pleasing pictures which had perished with the passage of time.¹⁸ There

are a number of references to be found in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (12th century A.D.) of consecration of the Buddhist images by the kings, queens or ministers particularly during the 7th-8th centuries A.D. and also the 11th century A.D. The Tibetan historian Taranatha (16th century A.D.) refers to a Kashmiri art style of painting and sculpture established by Hasaraja during the 8th-9th centuries A.D.¹⁹

The earliest evidence of the Kashmir School of Art is provided by the paintings on the wooden covers of the Gilgit manuscripts. Among the two covers published by P. Banerjee²⁰, the painting of manuscript no. 2 represents the Kashmiri art style. On these paintings the Gandhara influence is noticed by the broad muscular treatment of chest and body. Same features are also found on certain paintings at Bamiyan and Western Tibet.

The most significant specimens of Kashmiri art are preserved in Western Tibet. According to Tibetan sources, as already noted, it was at the instance of the great Tibetan scholar Rin-chen Bzan Po (958-1055 A.D.) that the foundations of most of the Tibetan monasteries were laid. The king Yeses-od sent him to Kashmir to receive initiation in Buddhist lore. On his return journey Rin-chen bzan po took with him a group of thirty-two skilled artists. The group comprised skilled painters and sculptors. This helped Rin-chen bzan po in laying the foundation of monasteries and decorating them with excellent workmanship.²¹ Incidentally the name of one of these Kashmiri artists is given as Bhitaka. Rin-chen bzan po while in Kashmir got made by Bhitaka the bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara which he dedicated to the memory of his father.²² A large number of Kashmiri bronzes with Buddhist themes have survived in Tibet. Similar bronzes have also been discovered in the Kirghiz area.²³

Some sculptures found at the site of Adzhi-tepe in Western Turkistan bear a striking resemblance to the sculptures of Akhnur (Jammu) and Ushkur in Kashmir.²⁴ Buddhist images found at Pandrethan in Kashmir have their relation with the

sculptures of Hadda (Fondukistan).²⁵ These images can also be compared in their features to the sculptures from the cave no. xxi at Tien Lung Shan (Tang period 678-906 A.D.) It is important to note that the seated Buddha image carved on a high rock at Shakorai in Swat valley (7th-8th centuries A.D.) has its affinities with the 7th-8th centuries A.D. Tang sculptures in Central Asia. Also, the Buddhist images found at Soura in Kashmir have close affinity with the sculptures found at Ming-io Sharchuk (6th century A.D.) in Chinese Turkestan.²⁶

The Buddhist art of Kashmir is further represented by the art of Alchi (Ladakh). Tibetan sources state that the Kashmiri monks while on their way to Tibet, first settled at Sanid in Zanskar. Here, they built the Kanika monastery. Some paint, which remained unutilized was utilized in other two monasteries at Sumda (Zanskar) and Alchi. Here, some paint was saved again which was utilised in the Manggy monastery.²⁷ At Alchi, Dukhang (assembly hall) and Sumtsek (three story temple) are the earliest buildings. The uniqueness of Sumtsek is represented by its wooden doorway supported by beautifully carved wooden pillars. These pillars bear the traces of Kashmiri workmanship.²⁸ An old wooden image, four armed and holding a vessel in her only surviving hand was found by the State Department of Archaeology in the upper gallery of Sumtsek. The image bears profound Kashmiri influence.²⁹ Again, in the huge Stupa of Sumtsek there are three massive clay images of Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya and Manjushri. The robes of these images are decorated with paintings which bear Kashmiri influence to a great degree. The fourway *Chorten* near Sumtsek has a portrait of Rin-chen bzang po and two Kashmiri artists.³⁰ The male figure with a turban on one of the images in the temple of Manjushri, close to Sumtsek, possibly bears its origin to Kashmir.³¹ The wooden figure of a goddess from Alchi also represents the work of Kashmiri artists.³²

Iconographic affinities have been found among the paintings of Alchi, Dandan Uilik (Central Asia) and Dun huang (China). For example, we have the two figures of eleven

headed Avalokiteshvara in Sumtsek, holding the Sun and the Moon in his raised hands. The same symbols (Sun and Moon) are also found in mural paintings at Pangikent, Balawasti panel (National Museum, New Delhi), the Dandan Uilik panel (British Museum, London) and on a few banners from Dun huang³³ (National Museum, New Delhi). The *Nilamatapurana* describes Shiva holding Sun and Moon in his two hands to enable Vishnu to kill the water demon *Jalodbhava*.³⁴ Recently a stone sculpture of Shiva (7th century A.D.) holding Sun and Moon has been located at Baramulla in Kashmir.³⁵

Apart from Alchi, there are many other examples of Kashmiri art found in other parts of Tibet. The wall paintings in the monasteries of Mangnang and Guge are ascribed to eminent Kashmiri artists³⁶. Also, the doorways of Tsaparang, Tholing, Tabo show connections with the art of Kashmir.³⁷ In the small temple at Lhatse, which was dedicated to Kashmiri teacher Gayadhara, the construction of its doorway is also attributed to Kashmiri artists.³⁸ The statue from Luk, which was regarded as one of the country's leading artistic centres, is of Kashmiri origin.³⁹ At Tholing the statue of Vajrapani is also from Kashmir.⁴⁰ The Manjushri of Shakya monastery is also of Kashmiri origin and it is said to have been a gift from Shakyashribhadra (13th century A.D.) from Kashmir⁴¹.

The influence of Kashmiri tradition is also seen on one of the clay tablets (*ta'a ta'as*) from Tibet which used to be deposited in Chortens. These show the Buddha between two Bodhisattvas wearing a crown⁴². Also on the Thangkas (*Patas*) particularly of Western Tibet, it was the style of Kashmiri paintings which predominated in the beginning⁴³.

It is very difficult to draw a line of relationship between the art of Kashmir and the various Central Asian traditions. Because of its geographical situation, Kashmir nourished a special relationship with numerous kingdoms of Central Asia. Central Asian civilization itself was an amalgam of varied cultures. It is beyond doubt that there were direct cultural contacts between Kashmir and the neighbouring states in the

north. Kashmir being a principal centre for the spread of Buddhism, its art also must have considerably influenced the Buddhist art of Central Asia. In this context a legend as given by Yuan Chwang⁴⁴ about the miraculous transfer of the Buddha figure from Kashmir to P'o-ch'ieh i—a province of Chinese Turkistan near Khotan, is of great interest. It points to the supply of the Buddha statues from Kashmir to Khotan very early. The story also indicates that Kashmir was one of the channels through which the Buddhist art of Khotan maintained its links with the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara.

During the beginning of the Christian era, the art style of Kashmir seems to have had great affinity with that of the neighbouring areas of Gandhara and Central Asia. It was particularly till the 4th century A.D. that the art style of Kashmir was greatly affected by the Helenistic and Sassano-Iranian styles, through Gandhara. About the 6th century A.D. the art of Kashmir and Central Asia was mainly affected by the art of Gandhara. The Buddhist sculptures found at Ushkur in Kashmir are the examples of this fact. From the 4th century onwards the Gupta art also had its impact on the art of Kashmir and further its influence is seen in the Buddhist monasteries of Gandhara and Central Asia. In fact the sculptures and paintings found in the monasteries of Central Asia, Bamiyan and Fondukistan (Afghanistan) and also the ruins of sculptures found in Kashmir are greatly influenced by both the Gandhara and Gupta styles. According to J. Hackin⁴⁵ the Indian influence found on the paintings of Buddhist monasteries of Khotan, Dandan Uilik and Kashgar with Kashmirian elements was introduced through Kashmir. During the mediæval times i.e. 8th century A.D. onwards, and especially in the reign of powerful Lalitaditya, artists of the far-flung regions in Asia were attracted towards Kashmir with the result the art of Kashmir during this period received influences of various art styles. Thus the art of Kashmir during and after the reign of Lalitaditya represents a wonderful admixture of the Gupta, Gandhara, Chinese, Central Asian, and Iranian art styles.

From the 7th century onwards Kashmir played a very significant role in the dissemination of Buddhist art to Central Asia, Western Himalayas and Tibet. During this period Kashmir filled the vacuum that occurred with the destruction of the Buddhist establishments in Gandhara. Tibet mainly borrowed its religion from Kashmir. It is obvious that Kashmiri art styles also provided the Tibetan artists with the first models of Buddhist art.

References

1. cf. Brown, Percy, *Indian Architecture*, p. 155.
2. cf. *Ibid*, pp. 154-155.
3. Tucci, G., finds some affinities of the figure of a *Sadhu* from Western Tibet with the *Sadhu* depicted on terracottas from Harwan. cf. *Transhimalaya*, p. 92, pl. 114, 1933, Geneva.
4. Kak, R.C., *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 107.
5. The umbrella shape can be still seen on early mosques of Kashmir.
6. Goetz, M, 'Mediaeval Sculpture of Kashmir', *Marg* vol. 8, 1955, p. 65.
7. cf. Kak, R.C., *op cit.*, pp. 115-116.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
9. Rawland, B., *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 110.
10. Kak, *op.cit.* p. 147.
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12. Roerich, G., *The Blue Annals*, Calcutta p. 378. 1949-53.
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15. Snellgrove, David, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, vol. I, p. 51.
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18. *Avadanakalpalata*, Intro, to 108th *Pallava*, pp. 11-13.
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28. cf. Tucci, *Transhimalaya*, p. 143, pl. 135, also cf. Bhan, J.L., *Ladakh, Life & Culture*, p. 57.
29. cf. Bhan, *op.cit.*, p. 69.
30. cf. *ibid.*, p. 56.

31. cf. *ibid.*, p. 59.
32. Tucci, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93, pl. 150.
33. cf. Bhan, pp. 54, 65.
34. Ghai, Ved, *The Nilamatapurana*, vol. I, pp. 6-7.
35. cf. *Ladakh. Life and Culture*, p. 65.
36. Tucci, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
37. cf. *ibid.*, pp. 93, 143, Pls. 138, 136, 129.
38. cf. *ibid.*, p. 143, Pl. 137.
39. cf. *ibid.*, p. 143, Pl. 144.
40. cf. *ibid.*, p. 143, Pl. 127.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 118, also cf. pp. 114-115.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
44. Waters, Thomes, *On Yuan Chwan's Travels*, pp. 298-299, also cf. Stein, A., *Ancient Khotan*, vol. I, p. 118.
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PART III

CULTURAL PANORAMA

TRADITION

Chapter 2

CASHMIRI BRAHMINISM AND THE
DISTINCTIVE CULTURE

PART III

CULTURAL PANAROMA

TRADITIONS

Chapter 1

KASHMIRI BRAHMINS AND THEIR DISTINCTIVE CULTURE

S.L. PANDIT

In the varied and colourful patterns that through centuries have evolved to form the rich mosaic of Indian society, the *Brahmins* comprised the accepted highest category of the ancient Vedic caste hierarchy. Further, it is understood that through our several millennia of history and legend they have played vital role as scholars, scientists, teachers, philosophers and occasionally as political advisers of rulers and empire builders, while denying to themselves opportunities of amassing wealth and other material benefits that are now widely associated all over the world with the rat race for political power. Even so, with their wide patterns of regional characteristics, the Brahmin communities had acquired distinctive social and ritual traditions varying from region to region. But largely they had held together as a unifying force through their acceptance of Sanskrit as the principal medium of culture, religion and higher levels of research. As we know, while all the North Indian languages have been derived from the Aryan Sanskrit, even in the south, with its distinctive Dravidian languages as hoary as Sanskrit, the supremacy of Vedic Sanskrit had been accepted as the principal medium of inter-regional commerce of the highest level from Kashmir to Cape Camorin, till the time when

following the consolidation of Muslim rule over the sub-continent, Persian was imposed as a dominant official language till English took its place following the establishment of British rule over the sub-continent. Even so, following the consolidation of Mughal rule, some of the leading representatives of the Mughal power patronized the wealth of Sanskrit heritage by having ancient classics of this medium translated into Persian. Later, soon after the British adventurers acquired some solid bases of regional authority, an enlightened Britisher, Sir William Jones, took a solid initiative in having some outstanding Sanskrit works translated into English and thus consequently revealed to the astonishing gaze of European scholars.

In short, the point is that while it is this hierarchy of Sanskrit culture that held together the Brahmin community all over India, at the same time the Brahmin communities of various regions in due course evolved their special characteristics governing their social life and religious practices and affinities. Among these the Brahmin community of Kashmir, in spite of their limited numbers and partial geographical isolation from the rest of the subcontinent, built up through centuries some special features of social and religious behavior which enabled them not only to hold together as an influential minority community in Kashmir, but that later a smaller migrant group of this community, mainly urban based in North India and Rajputana, came to leave their distinctive imprint on the cultural and political developments taking shape in the country during the past two centuries. It is, however, a fact that even these talented migrants continued to draw their inspiration in various ways from their past heritage in Kashmir, which continued to be their principal regional base till the last decade of the present century. So it might be of interest to us as representatives of that past heritage to know and understand the principal distinctive features of that heritage, especially in the context of general religious practices and social behaviour.

First, a brief mention of the origin, historical and legendary, of the Kashmir Brahmin community. According to accept-

ed traditions in the rest of the country, Kashmiri Brahmins are believed to be a branch of the Saraswat Brahmins who were so called because they were believed to have settled along the course of a semi-mythical river of North India called Saraswati named after the Vedic goddess of learning, soon after the Vedic Aryans settled firmly over this region of India. Then there follows a legend that when this river dried up, these Brahmins got scattered. There is a tradition that quite a large section of this uprooted community settled in the Western Konkan coast of the present state of Maharashtra, where they still hold together socially and call themselves "Saraswat Brahmins". Others moved further North into the Valley of Kashmir and, as the story goes, settled thereafter securing the permission of the Naga tribes who then ruled over this region. So, in the course of centuries, while holding fast to their traditional Aryan Vedic moorings, they sought to work out certain patterns of religious and social behavior which distinguish them marginally from the Brahmanic traditions of the rest of India.

This in short is how legendary tradition places the settlement and evolution of this Brahmin community in Kashmir. Some discerning Western scholars have tried, in view of the distinctive physical features of this community, to class them as probably the still continuing purest possible stock of Vedic Aryans who, in some still not positively located past age, came to settle in the Indian subcontinent. There is no doubt that members of this small Brahmin community continue even upto now to hark back to their Vedic past. But it is obvious that, in their comparatively isolated mountain girt habitat, they tried to recreate for themselves in the Valley parallel important traditional places of pilgrimage so dear to Hindus in the rest of India. For example, they had marked a spot in the North of the Valley where a mountain stream flows into a lake as Harmukat Ganga and would till very recent times consign the ashes of their departed ones in its waters when they could not easily reach the traditional river Ganga venerated by all Hindus through countless ages. Similarly, about twelve miles be-

low Srinagar at Shadipur, they treated the confluence of the Jehlum (*Vitasta* as named in our ancient Sanskrit scriptures) and a mountain stream still named Sindh in Kashmir, as of equal status in sanctity to Prayag (now Allahabad) where, the waters of the holiest rivers of Hindu faith, Ganga and Yamuna along with the legendary Saraswati, mingle their streams before they move onwards to empty their waters in the Bay of Bengal. Similarly, many other leading places of pilgrimage in India are reduplicated in the Valley. In fact, as several foreign travellers to Kashmir have observed during the past three to four centuries, the whole Valley of Kashmir is dotted with Hindu pilgrim centres located at lakes and springs and on mountain ranges. In this pattern also fall the holy springs named usually as *Naag*, obviously harking back to an unrecorded pre-Aryan phase of Kashmir chronicles.

To these distinctive features of Hindu tradition in the Valley, may be added the unique and still preserved texts of works that, like *Nilamat Purana* and *Kathasaritasagar*, are a product of ancient wisdom expressed in the form of imaginatively conceived tales like the famed *Panchatantra* tales about beasts and birds. As in the rest of India, the emergence of the Buddhist movement was meant to question the sanctity of the caste system and the Vedic ritualistic worship. With the perversion and complication of Buddha's simple creed, as has happened to most other religious movements in the world, there followed a revival of what may be described as Brahmanic Hinduism, paving the way for the imposition of a sort of absurdly rigid caste system and untouchability. While the impact of this counter-revolution led to unprecedented and almost inhuman rigidity in certain regions in the South, there was no revival of the caste system in Kashmir. For one, the Brahmin community of Kashmir appears to have cooperated with the spread of the Buddhist faith, for many Kashmiri Brahmins travelled to China and Far East as missionaries of this movement without rejecting altogether their Brahminic past. Then came Islam to the Valley, first through missionaries of this new aggres-

sive foreign faith and later in the form of rulers in the late fourteenth century A.D. The proselytizing zeal of Sultan Sikander, in fact, led to a crusade of total suppression of the Hindu religion and destruction of its places of worship. With this onslaught, while the lower Hindu castes altogether disappeared from the scene, only a small section of the Brahmin caste refused to submit to this holocaust, preferring death or voluntary exile from their homeland. But human history is dotted with numerous surprising developments. In the history of Kashmir, a new development was marked by the benign era of Sikander's son and successor, Zain-ul Abidin, who ruled over Kashmir for half a century and most zealously pursued a policy of reclaiming and rehabilitating the Brahmin community as a value-based section of the population. So, in the absence of any lower Hindu castes for several centuries, the Brahmins of Kashmir have traditionally remained immune from the worst absurdities of the Hindu caste system.

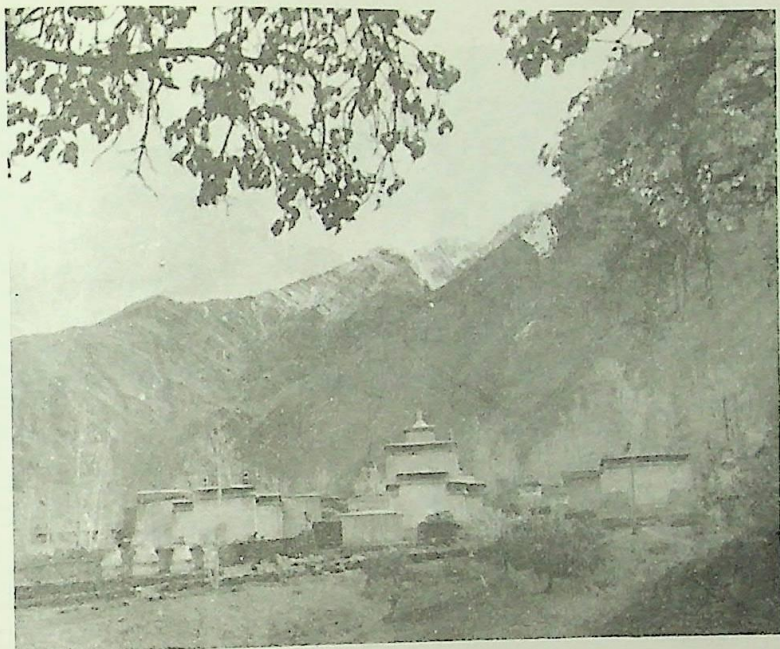
Apart from the tolerant phase of Muslim rule first firmly inaugurated by Zain-ul-Abidin and later zealously revived by Akbar, the history of Kashmir was marked about this era by the emergence of other harmonizing factors among both the Muslims and Brahmins of the Valley. While the scholarly Brahmins evolved a new universal aspect of Hindu ethos in the form of *Shaivism*, the Muslims were deeply involved in a tolerant aspect of Islamic *Sufism* marked by the rise of what is called the *Rishi* cult in Kashmir. These new developments came to be personified in the careers and utterances in native Kashmiri of Lall Ded (a Hindu wandering woman saint) and Saint Nur-ud-Din Noorani, popularly known as Nund Rishi, whose tomb is still venerated both by Muslims and Hindus as a seat of pilgrimage at Chrar, a hillside village, west of Srinagar.

It is true that the Kashmiri Brahmins belong basically to the mainstream of the centuries old Indian Brahminhood. Nevertheless, because of their comparative geographical isolation from the Northern Indian plains and the disappearance of the

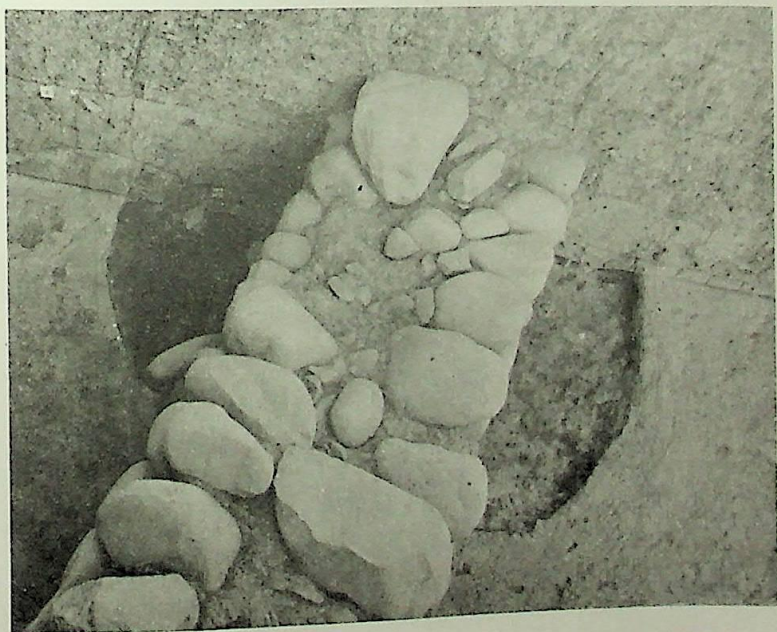
lower castes under the impact of Buddhism and later of Islam, they evolved a distinct pattern of social behavior. For one, they were not obsessed by a "touch-me-not" policy, so characteristic till recent times of the Brahmins in South India; and, in fact, they were willing to accept uncooked eatables even from Muslims. Moreover, in their cuisine they had no hesitation in taking to flesh foods like mutton and fish, while they rigidly avoided till recent times consuming poultry products, both flesh and eggs. Following the consolidation of Muslim rule, while they retained their attachment to Vedic Sanskrit as the medium of their religious scriptures, they easily took to learning Persian when it got confirmed as the principal official language for transacting official business and later even for their private correspondence.

In the context of what has been already observed, with the evolution of *Shaivism* as a distinct religious philosophy, the Shiva worship assumed special importance along with the continuing veneration of other gods of the Hindu pantheon and the various aspects of the worship of the Goddess as the Supreme Divine Mother.

It is thus not surprising that, with the ascendancy of Shiva worship, the observance of *Maha Shivratri* festival in the first dark fortnight of the month of Phalgun (corresponding to February in the international Christian calendar) came to be observed as the principal religious festival in the annual calendar of Kashmiri Brahmins. In the traditional Hindu pantheon, Shiva is represented in various forms, as the Destroyer of the Hindu trinity comprising in addition of Brahma (the Creator) and Vishnu (the Preserver). But later Shiva is represented also as the *Nataraja* or the supreme representative and inspirer of dance and music. Moreover, in Kashmir Shaivism, Shiva is projected as the abiding revelation of cosmos and of all life, both visible and invisible. This amounts to a projection of some modification of the ancient *Upanishadic* presentation of all the universe as we see it or perceive it intellectually as *Maya*, an illusion or play show as



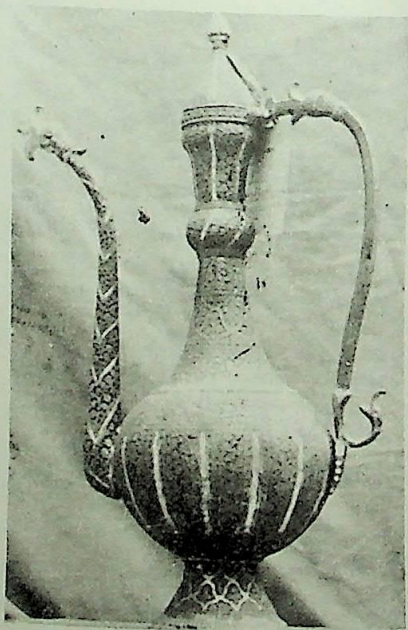
General view of Alchi Monastery (Ladakh).



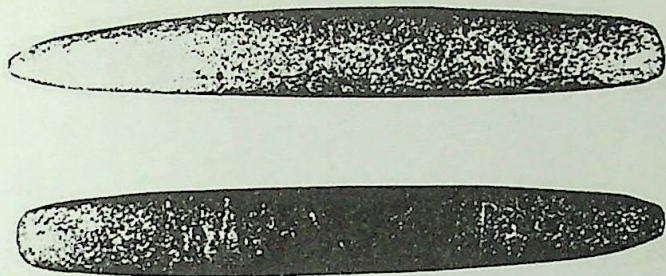
Burzahom: Dwelling pit of earliest man in Kashmir and the stone wall of the later period sealing it (Srinagar).



A Kashmiri Pandit woman in her native dress.



Aftaba (Jahengir's period), Kashmir.



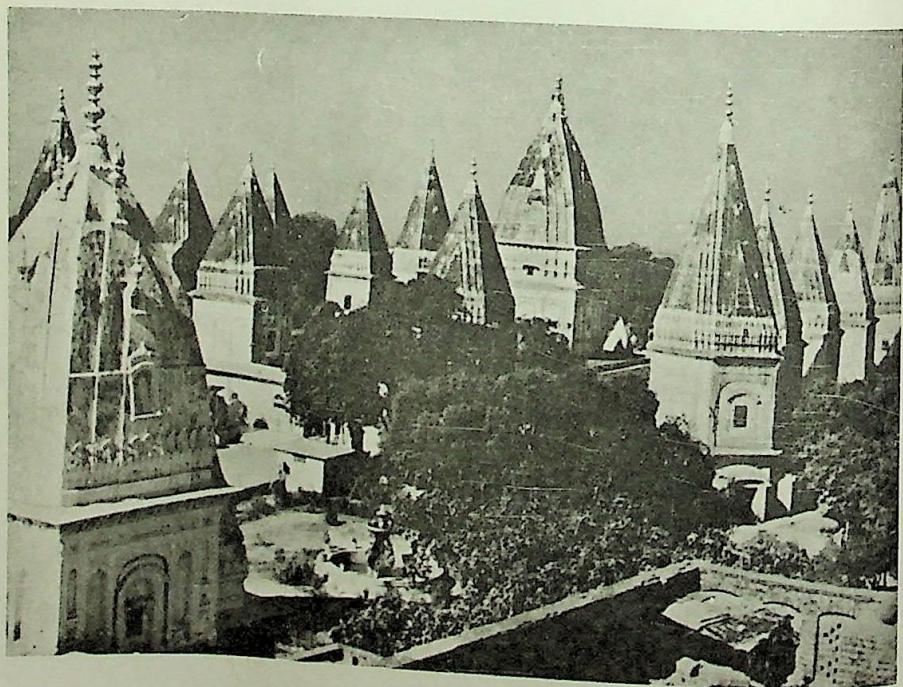
Largest Stone Celt so far discovered.



Two Kashmiri ladies in their native dress and ornaments.



Three headed Siva figure from Kashmir.



The Raghunath Mandir, Jammu.

projected by the Eternal Divine Creator of time and space. Traditionally among Kashmiri Brahmins the festival of *Shivratri* was spread over the major part of a fortnight, with special distinct religious and social rituals marking each day of the period and culminating obviously in the night-long worship followed by feasting on the night of the thirteenth of the dark fortnight of Phalgun. Incidentally, in the Valley of Kashmir this festival period was also expected to prepare the people for the oncoming of the spring season marking a renewal of all life in the mountain girt and snow-bound Valley. As an example, the festival of *Durga Puja* in Bengal has provided a parallel in its religious and social dimensions to *Shivratri* as celebrated in Kashmir through centuries past. With the recent dispersal of the Brahmins of Kashmir over the Indian subcontinent and abroad in distant lands, obviously in their vastly changed social and working environments, our people have not now adequate leisure and urge to observe this subnational festival as elaborately as it used to be celebrated back in the Valley of the Gods. Even so, we should observe it all over the world, maybe in abridged versions, with as much faith and fervour as our forbears did so over several centuries past.

Chapter 2

WOMEN OF KASHMIR

ASHA DHAR

In the beautiful Valley of Kashmir, an atmosphere of tranquility pervaded until the beginning of the 14th century, which was reflected in the daily lives of women and in their cultural and intellectual achievements.

With the introduction of Islam into the Valley in the 14th century, the local Brahminical movement reacted by imposing a stultifying orthodoxy on the Hindu women. They were confined to quarters, unable to leave the protective walls of their homes. Thus caged, the women lost all their precious freedoms, one by one.

Centuries were to pass before the advent of the British with their missionary schools. The spark of education was reignited, and today Kashmiri women are in the process of regaining their freedom.

The Dark Ages

The pangs of deprivation became acute under the Afghan rule in the Valley which began in 1752 A.D. Molestation, rape and kidnapping of Kashmiri women, proselytising and conversion of their men, became the style of functioning of the Afghan rulers in the Valley.

Fearful that honour and chastity of their women were in danger, men laid down their rule of thumb on the womenfolk. A new ethos of women being groomed to subservience and subjected to blatant gender discrimination in their parental

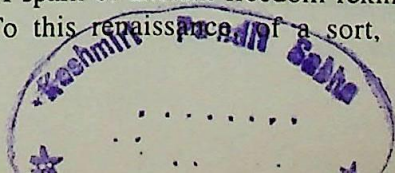
homes, maltreatment at in-laws, replaced the old one of dignity and equality. The image that "man was her god-provider-protector and life without that prop was not worth living" got etched on their minds. This led to women surrendering totally to patriarch-matriarch domination and that stifled their independent spirit. They lost the sense of self-value and self-pride. Seclusion, grinding domestic chores, child marriages and endless procreation emaciated women and led to their premature deaths. Kashmir geniuses: the poetess-philosopher Lalleshwari; bruised in love poetesses Arnimal and Habba Khatun, projected in enduring verse, the deprivation and stagnation that had beset women in Kashmir. This pathetic state of women persisted until the end of the rule of the Dogra monarch, Ranbir Singh.

Role of Missionaries

The early fifties of the 19th century saw a silver lining in the sky, when the Christian missionaries arrived in the beautiful Valley. Motivated by a humanitarian zeal, they applied themselves straightaway to improve the health situation of Kashmiris in general and women in particular. In the process, they found innate intelligence in Kashmiri women and noticed that they were totally illiterate. And, whatever little they had been taught, belonged exclusively to religious studies.

The missionaries took it upon themselves to fill this gaping vacuum. All the same, they were wary of local sensitivity and adopted a cautious approach. They began with improvement in women's health and introducing them to 3 Rs in the English language. At that stage, more than that would mean encroaching upon Kashmiris' sense of privacy. Improvement in health and grasp of elementary education had a salutary effect. Thus encouraged by the end of the nineties, they opened a Christian Mission School for girls in Srinagar.

What became discernible was the change in the mental outlook of women. From the classrooms, signs of resurgence showed and spread slowly. A spark of ancient freedom rekindle in the hearts of women. To this renaissance of a sort, the



response from the enlightened Kashmiri men was positive. In 1912, a committee was formed of some State officials and a smattering of educated Kashmiri men. The committee recommended to the then ruler, Maharaja Pratap Singh, that facilities, at government level, be provided for imparting education to women. In response to this committee's recommendations, two schools for girls—one in Srinagar and one in Jammu—were started by the government. Following this, a primary school for Hindu girls was opened in the heart of Srinagar city, followed by another school for Muslim girls. The latter was managed by Muslim educationists.

More Schools

Within well over a decade, education for girls at primary and secondary levels had made considerable progress via the Mission School, the Hindu Girls School, the Muslim Girls School and other denominational schools. Yet, there was no woman university graduate anywhere in sight.

The lacuna was filled by the plea made by the far-sighted Theosophist of world fame Dr. Annie Besant. She sounded the clarion call for higher education for women so as to usher in an overall progress in Kashmiri homes and to the development of the State. Her call was received and responded to warmly by the local Theosophists.

In 1926, the Women's Welfare Trust—with secular leanings—was founded in Srinagar City. The Trust was formed with the object of promoting an overall development of women—physical as well as intellectual. Dr. Margaret E. Cousins was one of its founder members. Other members of the Trust were the local visionaries, who wished to see Kashmiri women restored to their earlier historical status of dignity. Their zeal was tremendous, despite the odds and opposition from the orthodox folks. Six primary schools, three middle schools and one high school were opened in Srinagar city under the auspices of the Trust.

Women's Welfare Trust

The first graduates of the Trust schools went in for University education and took to such chosen professions as teaching and medicine. They wanted to maintain a balance between the demands on them as housewives and their adopted professions.

Besides education, the Trust intended to attend to other disabilities that women suffered from in the Hindu community. These were pathbreaking issues, like, widow remarriage, dowry-less marriages, elimination of wasteful spending, changes in attire and attitudes, and channelising women's energy towards economic independence, and such other issues.

The core group of graduates of the Trust formed the All Kashmir Girls' Association in 1944. Equally enthusiastic youngsters sponsored the Women's League. Both Associations became a forum for debate and discussions on the prevailing social evils in the community and soliciting public opinion to eliminate them.

The atmosphere for change was there, and enthusiasm to bring it in, tremendous. Earlier, Maharaja Hari Singh, the reigning monarch, who had exposure to the western liberal societies, had launched a multi-pronged attack on women's illiteracy, backwardness, poverty and disease. Liberal grants-in-aid from the State exchequer were given to private schools for women. At the government-level, the Women's Welfare Association was formed with the four-fold aim to: uplift women; to open gymnasium for women's recreational activities; to open handicraft centres in order to impart craft-training to poor women; to open health-care centres; and, to open more schools for them.

Progressive Legislation

The Government passed an act, on the lines of the Sharada Act, 1929 (in force all over India) to eradicate the child marriage practice. The marriageable age for boys was raised to 18 and for girls to 15. In 1930, the local earnest

youngmen had rallied under an umbrella organisation, called Fraternity, with the avowed object of combatting social malaise eating into the vitals of the Kashmiri Hindu community. A year later, the Fraternity was rechristened the Sanatan Dharma Young-Men's Association (popularly called Yuvak Sabha). Vigorous thrust was given to women's education, reforms in their costume, widow remarriages, etc. In one way or the other, an all-round development of women in Kashmir had become a point of popular concern.

The original All Kashmir Girls' Association turned into the Social Sudhar Samiti, young and committed members of both genders, worked tirelessly to remove cobwebs from popular minds and practically implement reforms envisaged earlier. Their drive was electrifying. They would have achieved the desired goal fully but for the fiercely individualistic Kashmiri's obduracy to follow any diktat. The Samiti's early effervescence frittered away as quickly as it took off.

Enter the Sheikh

At the same period, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the leader of Kashmiris, launched the movement for the end of the Dogra rule in Kashmir and for the demand of New Kashmir. Under his stewardship, and later, as the Chief Minister of the State, changes came unbelievably fast, in women's education, their participation in political, social and economic fields. The change was more conspicuous amongst the Muslim women.

The early fifties, however, witnessed a phenomenal change in the attitudes of all Kashmiris towards women. Reluctant parents no longer needed coaxing to send their daughters to schools and colleges. There was an all-round spontaneity, and that too, very fast. The Government College for Women was opened in 1950 in Srinagar, thus throwing open the portals of higher education to a wider section of Kashmiri women. Its all-women faculty members were the product of co-education institutions, Sri Pratap College and Amar Singh College.

product of co-education institutions, Sri Pratap College and Amar Singh College.

Change in Costume

A phenomenal change had come already in the attire of Hindu women. They had discarded the unweildy *pheran* for a new-look sari-blouse-petticoat ensemble. In the early fifties, Muslim women followed suit and went in for shalwar-kameez-dupatta combination, also replacing the traditional *pheran*.

Since then, young Kashmiri women are seen chic, confident, ambitious and assiduous—perhaps more pronounced than in other States of India. There is in them an urge, almost compulsive, for economic independence. A new spirit of study, research and exploration permeates their cadres. In them, there is an unexpressed desire to do what men do, compete with them in every field and compete equally with them. Coolly they walk into professionalism. They are everywhere—in the traditional jobs, like doctors, professors and teachers; they are in non-traditional jobs, like engineers (of all disciplines), architects, lawyers, criminologists, sociologists, linguists, researchers, writers, journalists, in the electronic media. Some of them pursue fine arts—painting, music, designing, etc., with equal zeal. They take up multi-roles: of running home and profession with meticulous plan and absolute ease. Name any line and they are there.

Priorities

Day by day, their professional ambitions soar. The new generation of women is determined to go the full distance. Though marriage still has the first priority in their scheme of things, generally careers are chosen to maintain equilibrium in married life and professionalism. Any profession, which is likely to disturb this equilibrium is, by and large, avoided. They are not, however, prepared to give up their jobs at the first peal of wedding bells. Nor are they in any great hurry to consider marriage unless they get a grip on their professions and their lives.

Involved thus in multi-roles, traditional and modern, they have indeed taken a heavier load on themselves. As supplementers of family income, so that they are able to meet the varied demands of the materialistic quest around them; and, as planners and executors of household chores (with scant help from menfolk, who still gloat in the old taboo-ridden lingua: "not my job attitude"), things get tough for them. Few of them are forced to sacrifice family responsibilities for the demands of professional excellence. The responsibility is pushed on to the supportive family. Sometimes there are flashpoints between the matriarchs and the aspirant young women. Generally, the young women feign a suave stance—not frivolous—out accommodating. Other times, when the going goes tough, the young resort to nuclear-family system, on the support of hired helps.

New Horizons

By and large, the modern Kashmiri women seem to dangle between two behaviour patterns. They are highly qualified yet haven't adopted the scientific temperament in their lives. They pay scant attention to wipe off anachronistic customs in the community. On the other hand, many alien ones are superimposed on them, which makes everything appear frivolous and wasteful. Individually, they have been achievers. Individually again, they show enormous confidence. They are remarkably quick on the uptake. Yet, they haven't thrown up any philosophers, reformers, religious missionaries, or big achievers so far. They appear largely self-promoters, self-achievers and self-centred.

The electronic media and the press have attracted quite a few; adventure or sports and services which need grit, haven't, however lured them as yet. Nor have the administrative jobs caught their fancy.

Kashmiri women have come a long way. They have the determination; and they have the rich legacy of their great past. Aspire higher and even higher, daughters of Kashmir!

Chapter 3

THE SURVIVAL OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF KASHMIR

S.P. SHRIVASTAVA

It is a well-known fact that Kashmir has been renowned for her rich cultural heritage and splendid natural beauty since the dawn of civilisation.

Nature has bestowed all her cherished treasures of charming beauty upon this Valley. It is but natural to note that Kashmir remained a source of inspiration to other parts of our country in particular and the whole world in general through the centuries. Unfortunately, the cultural and political history of Kashmir has been full of unbearable and unexpected upheavals. Situated as it is in the most vulnerable position geographically, and the most delicate position politically, it experienced mixing and mingling of various cultures, social orders and religions. The early Vedic civilisation set its roots in Kashmir, the great Buddhist philosophy flourished there from 300 BC to 800 A.D., and the unique Shaiva philosophy originated in this beautiful Valley.

It was this Shaiva philosophy which with its significant approach to reality, its novelty, its practical usefulness and distinct thoughts influenced different schools of Indian philosophy, including *Tantra*.

Besides the local Naga cult, Vaishnavism and Shakti cult also flourished in Kashmir side by side without any problem. Later, Islam and Christianity also got themselves established in Kashmir with the same fervour.

The peculiar position of Kashmir provided a fertile soil for mixing of religious cultures and philosophies.

In the field of education too, Kashmir did not lag behind. There was a time when Kashmir was a great seat of learning. The great '*Sharada Pitha*' was recognised as one of the most prominent seats of learning in our country. Thousands of students from all parts of the world used to throng to this great centre of learning. Teaching in all branches of knowledge was imparted there.

In Kashmir's most congenial and favourable environment, many scholars achieved miraculous intellectual heights, and contributed their best to different fields of Sanskrit literature. Their invaluable contribution enriched Sanskrit literature to a commendable extent. Most theories of poetics were propounded there, and later on spread over into other parts of our country. In other branches too, the contributions of Kashmirian scholars excelled both in quantity and quality¹. Indian scholars like Vasugupta, the founder of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy; Mammata, a great rhetorician; Kalhana, a well-known historian; Abhinavagupta, a versatile genius; Kshemendra a prolific writer, Ratnakara, Ananda Vardhana, Bilhana and others were Kashmiri scholars and poets of high merit who produced literature of an immense value.

All their works dealing with diverse subjects such as religion, philosophy, romance, satire, dramaturgy, history, lexicon, grammar, sociology, etc, constituted a rich legacy in Sanskrit literature. It is beyond doubt that there is hardly any branch of Sanskrit literature which remained untouched by the Kashmirian scholars² who played a significant role in the development of Sanskrit literature³.

It is worthwhile to note that the poets of Kashmir showed their excellence in the field of poetry. The beauty and grandeur of the poetry composed by them was highly valued by both scholars and ordinary readers alike. The poetic creations of the Kashmiris cover a wide diversity of themes⁴. It was a general belief that Kashmir being the abode of the goddess of learning

was the most suitable place for composing unique and beautiful poetry. Bilhan claims that both poetry and saffron coexisted like two companions only in Kashmir and not elsewhere⁵.

A legend says that Shri Harsha, the celebrated writer of the *Naishadha Charit* (a well-known Sanskrit *Kavya*) had to go the Kashmir to get recognition for his work. It was only after Kashmiri scholars recognized its merit, the Goddess of Learning, *Sarswati* bestowed her benediction upon Shri Harsha's *Kavya*⁶. Shri Harsha himself has acknowledged his gratefulness to them for this favour⁷.

It is also gratifying that kings and monarchs of Kashmir granted great patronage to arts and letters.

Great kings like Lalitaditya, Avantivarman and Jayaditya were lovers of Sanskrit poetry in particular and other types of literature in general. Reading poetry always remained a favourable pastime for them. Again to quote Bilhana, even women in Kashmir were well-versed in the Sanskrit language, and the majority of people could speak Sanskrit fluently⁸. Sanskrit remained the official language of Kashmir even during the reign of the early Sultans e.g., upto the end of the 14th century⁹.

There was a belief among the people that if even a man with mediocre talent would go to Kashmir, he would be able to compose poetry of the highest standard. The same type of belief is now popular in European countries about the Alps. Is it that poetry and the snowy mountains go together?

The political history of Kashmir has attracted local historians and chroniclers like Kalhana and Jonaraja in the 12th and the 15th centuries respectively. They have recorded faithfully the account of the political developments in their times in Kashmir. Had these scholars not done this great service to the nation, much historical data would have been lost for ever as happened in other fields of culture in Kashmir. Aurel Stein was greatly pained by this. The favours with which nature has lavishly endowed this land in the womb of the Himalayas are not going to fade or vanish. But the relics of

its glorious past, which reflect on the life and conditions prevailing in Kashmir in earlier times, are bound to disappear, with the passage of time and with the growing western influence. Great are the changes which the last few decades have brought over Kashmir, greater, perhaps, than any which the country has experienced since the end of the Hindu period in history.

"It is easy to foresee that much of what is of value to the historical student will before long be destroyed or obliterated. It is time to collect as carefully as possible the materials still left for the study of old Kashmir and its earliest records. I have spared no efforts to serve this end, and in the result of my labours, I hope, there will be found some return for the boons which I owe to Kashmir"¹⁰. This statement of Aurel Stain warns us beyond doubt that whatever has survived the onslaughts of time needs to be protected very carefully before it also perishes for ever. These remarks of the great European orientologist should inspire us to greater efforts in bringing to light the still hidden treasures of Kashmir's cultural heritage.

It must be mentioned here that it was George Bühler who took initiative in this regard as in 1875-76 when he made an intensive tour of the Kashmir Valley in search of Sanskrit manuscripts. Collecting many rare and valuable manuscripts he prepared a detailed catalogue which appeared in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay as an extra number. For this Sanskrit scholarship is ever grateful to him.

With the help of Dr. Bühler's catalogue and Dr. K.S. Nagarajan's book on the contribution of Kashmir to Sanskrit literature we can assess easily how much Kashmir has contributed to enrich the country's literary and cultural heritage.

It is the need of the time that a thorough research be conducted on the various manuscripts catalogued by Bühler and have them published. Kashmir's cultural heritage is likely to vanish, as Stein feared more than a century ago, if urgent efforts are not made to save it.

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Chapter 4

SRI PRATAP SINGH MUSEUM— A REPOSITORY OF KASHMIR'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

M.S. ZAHID

The S.P.S. Museum is a repository of rare and valuable specimens of art and culture of Kashmir indicating civilizational progress and changes that have taken place in the Valley. The numerous exhibits displayed in the Museum throw significant light on how old and new phases of culture have emerged and their various strands got woven into bright and colourful fabric of a composite culture, indicating the advent of civilization and cultures and the new phases of the social and industrial changes since the emergence of civilisation in the Valley. These exhibits display the various aspects of old and new cultures which entered into the Valley, got nourished here and eclipsed giving place to new ones.

The S.P.S. Museum is housed in a two-storeyed building situated at Lal Mandi on the left side of river Jhelum which was once the summer palace of Maharaja of Kashmir. It was in 1898 that this building was converted into a museum. The idea of establishing the museum was given by Captain S.H. Godfrey and General Raja Amar Singh to the then Maharaja of Kashmir.

The idea was welcomed by the Maharaja with great enthusiasm. Under his inspiring guidance, the present museum came into being. The nucleus of the collection of this museum

was earlier based on the objects which were transferred from the *Toshkhanas* of Jammu and Kashmir. They mainly included shawls, paintings, arms and armoury, silver images, ornaments, copper, lead etc. etc. besides the copper and brass utensils and handicrafts of Leh and Skardu.

The Museum enriched its collection by way of purchases, gifts, donations, loans and transfer of art objects from various departments. The archaeological objects were mainly acquired by way of excavations and explorations by the State Archaeology Department. The archaeological section was in a very poor condition untill late Daya Ram Sahni joined as Superintendent, Archaeology and Museum heading in the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Libraries in 1913. Mr. Sahni subsequently carried out excavations at the ancient sites of Pandrethan, Parihaspura, Awantipura, and as a result of his tireless efforts the finds from these sites turned the museum into a precious institution. At present the Museum houses more than seven thousand items.

Museum Galleries

This Museum, being the oldest and largest one in the State, displays cultural heritage of Kashmir through its ten galleries. These are:

1. Archaeological Gallery

This section of the Museum comprises 1500 specimen which include pottery, terracota tiles, metal and stone objects, inscriptions and sculptures and miniature temples etc. dating from the 3rd millenium B.C. to 13th century AD. In this gallery life-size statues of Buddha, Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma are placed in a chronological order begning from 2nd century AD. to 12th century AD. Stone age tools have been acquired from newly excavated sites. Along with these are ninth century pottery from Awantipura. Second century tiles from Pahalgam and 3rd century Harwan tiles are also displayed in some of the

showcases. Inscriptions in Sharda, Persian and Arabic are displayed in this gallery and these are excellent specimen of calligraphic art.

2. Paintings Gallery

This section comprises six hundred and fifty-one (651) miniature paintings of different periods. Of these, some 121 paintings are exhibited openly on screens. The rest are in the reserve collection. The paintings which are on display are of the 17th and 18th century depicting *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* scenes, projecting both religious and secular themes. These pertain to Basohli, Kangra, Jammu and other neighbouring hilly areas of the State. There are many paintings of famous Muslim saints as well, like Maulana Roomi, Sheikh Hamza, Makhdoom Sahib, etc.

3. Arts and Crafts Gallery

This section comprises ancient arts and crafts for which Kashmir is known to the world outside. Out of a total collection of 1600 only 1000 art pieces depicting the artistic genius of Kashmiri craftsmen are on display, mostly dating to the early 18th century. These include Paper-Machie, Wood Work, Stoneware, Brassware, Copperware, Strawware, Bamboo work of Kishtwar etc. Large sized Aftaba of Mughal period with Persian inscriptions are other objects of attraction in this Gallery.

4. Arms and Armoury Gallery

This contains important collection of guns, shields, swords, daggers, knives, pistols and canons of the first quarter of the present century. These arms were in use during the Sikh, Dogra and Mughal periods. Swords with Arabic and Persian inscriptions are of special interest to the visitor. Out of five hundred, two hundred armoury objects are on display.

5. Textile Gallery

The Museum has more than 200 textile objects, which include *Shawls*, *Jamwars*, *Table-covers*, *Gabbas*, *Rumals* etc. In this Gallery, 69 objects of Textiles, Shawls, Rumals, Carpets etc. are displayed ranging from Afghan period (1752) to 1947 AD. The central piece of this Gallery is a map of Srinagar in needle work. It is a shawl which was prepared during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh and was presented as a gift to the Prince of Wales during his visit to Kashmir. Later on, it was auctioned in United Kingdom, from where it made its way back to Kashmir.

The map depicts all important buildings, mosques, temples, gardens, rivers, bridges and lakes of Srinagar.

A short note on the aforesaid document says that it is a very rare document and dates back to the Chak period in the Kashmir history. It is dated Jamid-ul-Awal 881 AH and the year reads as 883 AH also. It is evident that this document is 500 years old. It is written on birch-bark which has been pasted on a sheet of paper. The birch-bark is very brittle and due to its age, is in a deteriorating condition. The *Shajra* pertains to the property of Shiekh Maqdoom Humza who was one of the renowned Muslim saints of Kashmir. It mentions the names of the following persons :

1. Sheikh Ali Raina.
2. Hajoo Ishwari Vakil.
3. Ali Mohammad.
4. Khawaja Abdul Aziz.
5. Mir Sayeed Abdul Qasim.
6. Mohammad Mir.
7. Mulla Dost.
8. Sayeed Ali Najar.
9. Mulla Hussain.
10. Banday.

11. Shanker Nayak.
12. Kh. Hasan Qari.
13. Abdullah Dawood.

Some of the above-mentioned names are those of prominent persons in Kashmir history. It appears that the document has been written by Abdullah Dawood and is sealed and signed by others. It is interesting to note that it makes mention of the prevalent currency in those days. Further, it appears that Hindus and Muslims studied both the languages and also used them in day-to-day dealings.

9. Natural History Gallery

The Natural History Section of the Museum comprises about 600 specimens of animal kingdom in J & K. Of these 300 specimens are displayed. Including monkeys, bats, snow-leopard, bear, cats, crow, sparrow, pigeon, musk deer and varieties of cats and foxes. Water birds are also on display. A large-sized ostrich egg catches the attention of the visitors, being of a great interest to one and all.

10. Childrens' Gallery

This gallery has been established quite recently coinciding with the celebrations of the International Childrens' Year under the sincere efforts and guidance of Prof. P.N. Pushp. This has been organised to meet the long-felt need of the school children to impart them education on history and culture of the State through audio-visual devices. The exhibits carefully reflect themes. In this gallery slide shows are also shown to the visiting children. The exhibits depict themes related to the children and their educational requirements. This has served as a useful medium for bringing about cultural awareness among our school-going children.

Chapter 5

TRADITIONAL COSTUMES OF THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS : JAMMU, KASHMIR, LADAKH AND HIMACHAL PRADESH

M.L. PANDIT

Two of the northern Indian states, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, are spread across the high mountain ranges of the Western Himalayas. The State of Jammu and Kashmir comprises three geographical and administrative divisions—Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The population of the Jammu Division is mostly Dogra Hindu, that of the Valley of Kashmir 95% Kashmir Muslim, and that of Ladakh Buddhist and Muslim. With great variations of geographical level, rising from the lowest in Jammu to the highest in Ladakh, the climate varies from region to region. The temperature varies from the extreme heat of the Punjab plains in Jammu to the intensity of cold that keeps perpetual snow on the mountain tops of the Valley and Ladakh. The moderate cold weather of Kashmir contrasts with the extreme dry cold of Ladakh, where, at places, the mercury plunges down to - 30° celsius in December and January. Racially, the Dogras and Kashmiris are Aryans, while the Ladakhis are Tibetan Turanians. The ethnic, religious, and climatic differences determine the variety of cultures and life-styles, which, in turn, account for the different modes of dress and traditional attire that one finds in different parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Dogras are of the great Aryan race that came from Central Asia and became the dominant population of the Indian sub-continent. Those of that race, who settled in the lower west Himalayan hills, acquired, in course of centuries, characteristics, which distinguish them from the inhabitants of the plains, on the one hand, and of the higher mountains, on the other. The settlers in the hills that edge the Punjab, and those who retained their Hindu faith, bear the name of Dogra, while the region they inhabit is called Dugar Desh. The Dogras are divided into sub-castes like Brahman, Rajput, Mian and Khatri. All these castes share a common language, *Dogri* and common dress. The men wear a loose shirt, long narrow *pyjamas*, a buttoned-up long coat, and a loosely tied turban, which could be white or dyed as per the wearer's choice. A Dogra's status in society determines the selection of the material, which varies from the rough homespun cotton to the fine silk of multiple hues. The *kamarband*, or belt of cloth worn in the earlier centuries, has now been almost discarded. Some Dogra Brahmans, especially of the Pandit cast, prefer a white *dhoti*, which they wrap round their legs in the manner of the other Brahmans of North India. The Dogras of the upper hills also wear the same type of clothes, but only their choice of the material is woollen *puttoo*, with a cap of the same, instead of the turban.

The Dogra women uniformly wear a long shirt or *kurta* and *churidar pyjamas* with an *odani* to cover the upper parts of their bodies. The brides are bedecked in embroidered silken or velvet clothes, which could occasionally have multi-coloured sequins instead of embroidery. On the *Basant Panchami* festival in the spring, the Dogra women of all ages and classes wear the traditional orange dresses. The educated and working ladies among them are more and more opting for the *choli-sari* combination. The college and university girls are now going in for *salwar-kameez* as well as jeans and tops.

From Jammu, let us go across the Pir Panchal range of mountains into the delectable valley of Kashmir. It has been variously described as the Paradise on Earth, the Jewel of the Himalayas, and the Switzerland of Asia. It enjoys a moderate

climate throughout the year except for cold and snow in the winter months of December to February. Accordingly, the costumes of the Muslim population here are different from those of the people in Jammu. They wear wide *pyjamas* or *salwars* and a long, loose, larg-sleeved gown called *pheran*—a corruption of the Persian word, *pairahan*, meaning a kind of cloak, and an embroidered cotton skull-cap. The more affluent among them wear costly fur caps. For their feet, they have either the common shoes worn in the rest of India, or else—specially to combat the winter snows—a pair of grass shoes or *pulahor*, made of paddy straw. The straw is first twisted into a thin rope, and then interwoven to make thick soles, which are fastened on feet like sandals. Another unique footwear is *khraiv* or wooden clogs made of walnut wood (costly and superior) or willow (cheap and inferior), which stand three inches from the ground, thus allowing a comparatively dry passage through light snow and mud.

Fredrick Drew (1875), Associate of the Royal School of Mines, and at one time in the service of Maharaja Ranbir Singh of J & K, writes in his geographical account of Kashmir:

“Anyone who may be bound for a long march will put on leggings of a peculiar kind, a bandage about six inches wide and four yards long, would round from the ankle upto just below the knees, and then fastened by an equally long string. . . . This, which is called *patawa*, is a much cherished piece of dress, and without doubt is a very good thing for mountain work. . . .”¹

There is a custom among the Kashmiri Hindus of making the bride wear a decorated straw sandal at the time of her *lagan* or marriage. Again, she is gifted a pair of wooden clogs on the occasion of her first *Shivaratri*, a Hindu festival celebrating the wedding of Shiva and Parvati, after her marriage. Another gift is that of a *kangri*, which is an earthen pot enclosed in a tight-fitting basket of wicker-work, and can hold live charcoals to provide protective heat to Kashmiris through the severe winter months.

The Kashmiri Hindu men wear either a turban or a fur cap or a Gandhi cap or, else, go bare-headed. The traditional head-dress of their women is *taranga*. It consists of a red woollen cap, called *kalposh*, with a conical top of a material of silk and gold thread, known as *zarbaf*. This cap is tightly bound around the head with the help of a white starched and folded strip of cotton, *taranga*, covered with a muslin gauze, *zooj*, and over that is worn a length of white scarf, *poots*. This elaborate head-gear provides both warmth and protection from the gaze of the public. The Muslim women wear a variation of the same with appropriate changes made to suit their custom, social norms and temperament. It is known as *kasaba*, and some elderly women in the villages still wear this head-dress. In public, they wear a head to foot *burqa* to veil them from the roving male eyes.

With the growing inroads of the Western culture in Kashmir, these exotic traditional head-gears have almost disappeared. But the one item of dress common to women of all classes and religious communities through Kashmir is the *pashmina* or *rafal* shawl, which is as warm as it is light. The historians say that Queen Josephine of the French Emperor, Napoleon I of the early nineteenth century, was very fond of Cashmere shawls. Her collection of *jamwaar* shawls is perhaps still preserved in some museum in Paris. The younger generation of Kashmiri women have a preference for the Panjabi *kameez-shalwar* as well as the *sari*-blouse, fashionable all over India. The modern Kashmiri youngmen are cosmopolitan in their approach to dress, wearing anything from the *pathan* dress and *kurta-pyjamas* to shirt-pants and T-shirt with jeans.

So much for the variety of costumes in the Valley of Kashmir. Let us, now, turn to the dresses of the mountain-bound high plateau-dwellers of Ladakh. Their costume is, in fact, simple, compared to the complex head-gears of the women of Kashmir. It is all woollen, of a coarse and thick home-made cloth of natural drab colour, though the Buddhist Lamas wear it in maroon shade. The men wear a *choga* or wide long coat,

also known as *goncha*, tied at the waist with a woollen *kamarband* or scarf. Wearing nothing beneath this, with felt boots and cap, and may be an extra woollen wrapper, their attire is complete. The Ladakhi caps are jaunty skullcaps with projecting brims, or comfortable lamb-skin caps with large ear-flaps, which, in the summer, are stuck up behind in a curious manner, but provide the best possible protection against the biting cold in the winter. To the Ladakhis, their boots are of great importance. The stoney ground and the frozen snow, over which they have to walk, call for precautions. A piece of thick yak leather provides the sole, to which is joined a moulded felt top that reaches the ankles. Such shoes are good against cold and excellent for rock-climbing, where the country is dry.

The Ladakhi women wear a gown, the skirt of which is somewhat gathered into plaits. This gown is made of vertical strips of woollen cloth, generally blue and maroon, alternatively, but sometimes patterned and sewn together. Over the shoulders is worn a kind of shawl of sheepskin with the fur inside. For the head-dress, they have a strip of cloth, ornamented with shells or turquoises. They wear the same kind of shoes as the men. The costume of neither men nor women varies with the season of the year. The affluent Ladakhis have started wearing gowns made of red or blue velvet with decorative high necks, and caps of the same material. Sometimes, they even wear long western pants beneath the gown. As in the other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, the younger generation of the Ladakhis even wear jeans and T-shirts when away from home as a concession to the growing pop culture.

On the whole, the traditional costumes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir are both simple and exotic, and testify to the ethnic and cultural variety that a newcomer to these lands is bound to discover on his very first visit. Apart from the people living in the three main geographical regions, there are the Gujjars and Bakarwals, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes whose style of dress merits consideration. Social historians are of the view that these migrated into India from

Central Asia at different periods since the sixth century². Today, they concentrate in Poonch, Rajauri and Doda districts, and across the Pir Panchal on the foothills of Anantnag and Baramulla districts. During the summer months, the climatic conditions drive them, along with their cattle, sheep and goats-towards the higher hills, and they spread over to Mandi and Kangra districts of Himachal Pradesh. Though their speech is derived from some Hindi dialect, their social customs are those of the Muslims of the area where they live. Their traditional dress is that of the Pathans of the North-Western Frontier Province in Pakistan. It consists of a loose long shirt and a pair of shalwars. They also wear a sleeveless embroidered jacket, and a turban tied over a colourful conical skullcap, with its two ends hanging loose above and below the cap. Their foot-wear is a Peshawari chappal or leather sandals.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Gaddis of Bharmaur, the Thakars of Lahaul and the Kinnars of Kinnaur, have a tribal and ethnic identity separate from the Gujjars and Bakarwals. Economically, they are better off than the tribes in the rest of India. Being intelligent and commercial-minded, they have traded for centuries in markets across the border in Tibet and Central Asia. Their clothes and jewellery are costly affairs. D.N. Dhir writes about the Gaddis :

“Well- built and healthy, the Gaddis have a distinct dress. Men wear a knee-long woollen coat and move about bare legged. The women have an ankle-long skirt. Both tie their waists with long black woollen ropes, which in time of need are used for tying the herd or for rock climbing”³.

During the winter, to ward off the cold winds at the high altitudes where they live, the women throw a woollen shawl over the shoulders and tie a scarf around their heads, which gives them a distinctive look. Their nose-rings and ear-tops are decorative with small multi-coloured stones. The men prefer light blankets or shawls instead of cloaks in the cold weather.

In parts of Kinnaur, *chamu kurti* is an ordinary shirt worn by men. During the winter, it is put on under *chhuba*, a long

woollen cloak. *Chamu suthan* are woollen trousers worn by men. Resembling loose breeches, these are mostly of white or grey colour, but never black. *Thapang* or the Himachali cap is a common head-dress of men and women in Kinnaur. Women wear *choli*, *dhor*i, *chhanli* and *gachhang* for their dress. *Choli* is a full-sleeved blouse, *dhor*i is a kind of woollen *sari* with a girdle, *chhanli* a shawl wrapped around the shoulders with its two ends fastened together. With the exception of finger rings Kinnar men do not use ornaments. Some old men, however, wear ear-rings. Their women are very fond of ornaments. Thick bracelets, large ear rings, heavy silver chains, various kinds of heads and precious stones are the proud possession of Kinnar women.

All these traditional and ethnic costumes of the Western Himalays, centuries-old in their uniqueness and variety, are gradually disappearing under the impact of the culture of the West, which continues to grow in India even after the British left the sub-continent nearly half a century ago. This is equally true to all communities and tribes living in the Western Himalayas as in the rest of India. Another threat to our traditional dress culture is from the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, which has made it fashionable, for people of all communities and religious beliefs, to go in for the so-called "*Pathan* dress", which, formerly, only the Gujjars and Bakarwals of the hill tracts of the Lower Himalayas favoured as their costume. Something needs to be done at different levels of our social order to preserve our traditional styles of dress.

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Chapter 6

ARCHITECTURE OF KASHMIR DOWN THE AGES

RITA DARBARI

Kashmir is a valley ca 1800m above sea level, separated from the subcontinent of India by high snow clad mountainous range of the Himalaya. Till the beginning of this century, its only link with the subcontinent was a long and tortuous land route. In spite of the formidable link, Kashmir has been the meeting point of many widespread civilizations. It continued to maintain a certain indigenous and independent type of culture, all because of inherent aesthetic sense, stimulated by surrounding natural beauty, and rare adaptability of its inhabitants.

Kashmir architecture may broadly be classified in two distinct styles.

Pre-Islamic, and Islamic: Pre-Islamic period could be subdivided in two phases—(i) First phase, upto 700 A.D. (ii) Second phase, 700 A.D. to 1400 A.D. First phase consisted mainly of Buddhist buildings, as at this time Buddhism was much prevalent in the valley. However the buildings of this period exist barely in foundations, yet are of much significance, as they serve to explain the origin of building art in Kashmir. The remains of such early period can be studied in Harwan near Srinagar and at Ushkar near Baramulla.

The Harwan site represents a Buddhist settlement on the series of flat terraces on the slopes of high grounds overlooking the crystal waters of Dal Lake. The settlement included usual buildings of monastic establishment like Stupa court, *Viharas* and *Chaitya* hall. Stupa courts, which consisted of a Stupa on

a square base of three steps, a void in form, finished with a thirteen tiered finial, placed within a courtyard, arrangement very similar to that of Stupa courts of Gandhar. Chaitya, a temple, occupied the highest terrace, while all other structures were grouped below. Chaitya was an apsidal ended oblong chamber in a courtyard surrounded with a wall, very similar to Sirkap Chaitya at Taxila of the 1st century B.C. This was undoubtedly an influence because of exchanges that took place between Buddhist establishment of north western frontier and beyond at the time.

In this period three methods of building construction have been observed.

Primitive method : It consisted of embedding quantities of pebbles in masses of mud mortar and building up of walls with probably some temporary shutterings. **Modified method**: Around 300 A.D. walls of pebbles were reinforced at regular intervals by irregular blocks of stone which went through the whole width of a wall. It is known as 'diaper pebble' construction. **Final method** : Around 500 A.D., like rubble masonry, the walls were composed of large untrimmed stones called 'diaper rubble'. The walls were finally covered with terracotta tiles or panels, which were not only used as facing material for walls but were also used in courtyards. So profusely have they been used in this period that this period is often referred to as 'terracotta phase'.

These terracotta plaques often of 42 cm × 30 cm rectangular size, though not of finished quality, have motifs of half a dozen alien civilizations of ancient world, besides the indigenous and local ones. Greek 'swag', foliated bird, Persian vase, Roman rosette, Chinese fret, Indian elephant, Assyrian lion, figures of dancers, musicians, cavaliers, ascetics, distinguished by their costumes and accessories, These terracotta facings were very similar to the 1st cent. B.C. terracotta rural reliefs of Romans.

Thus Harwan site very obviously reflects the interaction that took place between various cultures in Kashmir and their impact on Kashmir architecture.

The second phase of pre-Islamic architecture, commencing from the 8th cent. A.D. shows a sudden emergence of a very superior style of architectural manifestations and is rightly termed as 'classical period' of building art in Kashmir. The pebble walls of the past were suddenly replaced by walls of immense stones, wrought with precision, surfaces finely dressed, bonded by exact and scientific means, all showing profound experience and patient skill of masons. The bonding was done either by (i) the use of cement (ii) by introduction of dowels, a method borrowed from Greek-Roman school. Stones as long as 4.8 m $\times$ 4.4 m $\times$ 1.6 m have been found to be used in the base of Chaitya temples. Though mortar is considered to have been introduced in India by Muslims in the 13th cent. A.D. but in Kashmir lime mortar is observed in 8th century A.D. itself, which is a matter of no little significance. Though buildings of this period are completely in ruins, but their remains confirm that their stone architecture, for its massive strength and simplicity of technical accomplishment has no match all over the world.

Lalitaditya (724-760) one of the greatest rulers of Kashmir, encouraged both Buddhism and Hinduism by erecting monuments to both the creeds.

Buddhist monuments built in the classical order were found in Parihaspura 22 km North west of Srinagar, and at Purandhishthana (presently known as Pandrethan). There is a clustre of three imposing monuments, a Stupa, a monastery and Chaitya hall in which colossal blocks of stones evenly dressed are joined in lime mortar or in some instances with metal dowels. The Chaitya hall amongst the three building is an interesting one, for it being different than the usual Chaitya designs. It was contained within a large courtyard, and occupied the central position. It was square in plan, raised on a double platform and consisted of a single square chamber internally with probable height about 30 m. This Chaitya was very unlike the traditional Chaitya halls with pillared nave and aisles and an apsidal end. On the contrary it was an original conception of indigenous style of the type of religious architecture.

Amongst Brahminical buildings, the Sun temple at Martand, built by Laliditya is a landmark of this period of buildings. The other temples in general consisted of a single central shrine, located within a courtyard with a cellular peristyle with a large gateway opposite the shrine. The absence of columned prayer hall temple planning reflect it as a place designed not for congregational worship, but a sanctum to house the deity. There are no *shikhars* in these temples, which bring them more akin to Gandhara Stupas or Greek temples than to Indo-Aryan temples. The prominent features of these temples were a recess or a niche with a trefoil arch within a high pitched triangular pediment, a pyramidal roof based on wooden construction, and fluted pillars with capital and entablature very similar to Doric orders of Greek buildings.

In places like Ludav, Pandrethan and elsewhere, some temples have been noticed which were placed in the centre of a shallow tank of water, thus denoting the prevalence of Naga or serpent worship. Most of the temples of the earlier period were roofed by means of stone slabs and beams, while some stray cases show domed roofs made up of oversailing courses of masonry have also been observed. Temples at Ludav belong to the early examples of Brahminical temples, which are followed by the Shankracharya temple built on the hill top with a square exterior and circular interior and beginning of high pitched pediment and trefoil arch. The modified design of this style next appeared in a temple at Narastan, some thirty miles south west of Srinagar where an enclosure wall around the temple is also observed. The final culmination of these temple designs in all their magnificence could be seen in the Sun temple at Martand.

The Sun temple at Martand has a main shrine on high plinth and a detached portico used probably for some ceremonials connected with sun worship. Both the buildings as usual are located within a courtyard surrounded by walls with large entrance gateways in the north side. The main shrine is covered with pyramidal roof with trefoil arched recesses

under the pediments, each face separated by massive plaster at each side. These boldly shaped mouldings were located at the telling points. Though the building is of average size, but throughout a feeling of a large scale construction is maintained with elements such as solid masonry, bold trefoil arches, stupendous walls, elegant arcades, symmetrical elevations completely in balance with the surrounding mountains.

While Lalitaditya's period is called the first golden age of Kashmir, the period from 855 to 883 AD is considered the second golden age of Kashmir during the reign of King Avantivarman and his immediate successors. A new capital city named Avantipur was established 27.5 m south-east of Srinagar on a commanding site overlooking the river Jhelum. But all that remains of the city at present are the ruins of two temples, one being a Shiva temple and the other a Vishnu temple.

The Shiva temple built by King Avantivarman was a larger temple based on *panchatna* planning with four supplementary shrines around the central shrine, may have been intended for public worship. While the Vishnu temple also on *panchatna* planning built by Avantivarman was a smaller, lavishly planned temple, for the personal use of royal family and court officials only. The temple is a finer version of the Martand temple, with details more precise and the overall effect though small but more ornate in comparison to the massive bulk of the Martand temple.

From Avantipur, the architectural activity shifted to Pattan in 883-902 when Shankarvarman, a successor, adopted the town as his seat of power. But as nothing substantial remains of the buildings here, not much can be concluded, though the temple plans seem to be on similar lines, excepting that there was a greater refinement of workmanship and ornamentation.

However, 10th century onwards, there was no further development in the temple architecture in Kashmir. In fact, construction of temples was concentrated on the North West Frontier of Kashmir, the temples similar in style to those in Kashmir but smaller in scale.

In contrast to the monumental stone building of the 1st millenium in Kashmir, the beginning of the 2nd millennium had all types of buildings in wood, while again under Moghul rule in 16th and 17th century A.D. wood was replaced by stone and architecture of an entirely different character came into existence. However, Kashmir architecture is known most distinctly for its wooden characteristics under Islamic rule than any other material.

Wood being available in abundance in Kashmir, and on account of the need of climate, the use of wood as building material has been in existence right from ancient times especially for residential buildings. But being a perishable material, the buildings in wood have disappeared, while stone of which usually religious buildings were made, still remain if not in whole, but in parts.

The early 2nd millenium is famous for its 'log construction' which consisted of walls built up of wooden logs placed horizontally and another laid cross wise in the form of 'headers and stretchers' as in brick work. Not only the walls but also heavy superstructures were built in the same style, while ordinary pillars were of a single tree trunk of cedar or *Deodar*, which was floated down the river to its destination.

The simplest method of log construction could be seen in the supports of the number of bridges built on River Jhelum, which are standing till date in the same condition. The supports consisted of a massive wooden structure appearing like an inverted pyramid with a truncated apex, resting on solidly built stone masonry under water. These pillars or pyramids were built of alternate courses of logs laid and placed transversely at right angles in such a manner that the whole mass could fairly withstand a flood current below and carry a reasonable load above.

In the houses logs were squared up and spaces in between courses filled with neat brick work finished with glazed tiles.

Unfortunately, in spite of such profuse use of woodwork, the wooden construction of this period does not show any

technical knowledge of timber construction and the art of joinery, which had been prevalent in Buddhist rock-cut architecture in other parts of India. Here the logs are simply joined to each other by stout wooden pins. There are no evidences of struts, trusses or diagonal members for lateral rigidity. The construction was based on deadweight being directed downwards as in stone masonry. On account of this unstable method of construction the building frequently collapsed. Fire was another reason for the destruction of wooden buildings. Thus it was very common to rebuild the same building again and again; very little of original remains were left out.

Tombs and mosques were also built in wood at this time. The mosque of Shah Hamdan was built on foundations composed of ancient temple materials. Its roof consisted of low pyramidal structure surmounted by open pavillion for the *Muazin* to summon people for prayers. Over the pavillion rose a steeple with finial 125 feet high from ground. The pyramidal roof consisted of multiple layers of birch barks (water-proof strata) spread on plants, resting on rafters and tidily covered with thatch mixed with thick compact mud. These pavillion structures called *Ziarats*, were a common sight in all mosques of this period, as they symbolized not only the most sacred and important parts of the mosque but also served the purpose of minarets of the typical mosque design.

The Jama Masjid, founded by Sikander Butshikan (1400 AD) was enlarged by Zain-ul Abidin. The tomb of Zain-ul Abidin's mother, Pir Hazi Muhamad Sahib's tomb and Jama Masjid at Pampore, are the other important examples of this period. The tombs however have a domical roof and a square chamber, and consist of oversailing courses of masonry resting on squarish arches at the springing level.

Under the Mughals the stone replaced the earlier timber-dominant building with grey limestone or granite which was used in a majestic manner as in Akbar's Hari Parbat Fort with its famous gateways Kathi Darwaza and Sangin Darwaza. The

Pathar Masjid of Noor Jehan and the stately Moghul gardens reflect the glory of the Mughals in Kashmir.

Throughout the two milleniums under study, it is observed that religious architecture to some extent had withstood the onslaught of time and has enlightened us with the design ideas of the past, while residential architecture has left no such traces. To close this article without throwing any light on residential architecture would be to leave it incomplete. However, if the last century could be any model for earlier periods, some concept of residential architecture of the Valley could also be framed. The residential style from the beginning of this century is observed to be of three categories. (i) houses of nobles and landlords, (ii) houses of the common man and (iii) floating houses.

The houses of nobles and landlords were elaborate structures, though approached like all houses from the main lane; the shopping lane or side lanes had an ornamental huge wooden gateway called *deedy*, to enable the entry of personal elephants or horses or carriages. The gateway opened into a paved forecourt leading to the main house which had either attached wings or some outhouses for different activities, like kitchens or *salhars* having *hammams* at one end, a storehouse for grains, timber, staples and toilets etc. The house was usually a four-storied structure, raised on a plinth of about four feet, with two large halls, one on each side of a central lobby containing a staircase at one end. One of these halls was used for receiving guests or officials, while the other was connected with *salhar* and was used as family dining room or a multipurpose room in winter. It was also called *vot*. First and second floors had generally four large bed-rooms with tiled attached rooms in between the two rooms on each side apparently used for toiletee. The third floor had again two large halls with partitioned small areas at one end called *shanshin*. The large rooms were called *kani*, which were used as family rooms, dining area, etc. in summer. These halls were also used for conducting religious functions like *Yagnopavits*, *Devgons*,

Lagans. The top-most floor, called 'Tower', was a single hall, formed out of the attic space in gabled roof of the house. This had usually windows on all its sides which besides giving a beautiful view of the areas around also enabled it to be used as *baradari* in summer to enjoy the cool afternoons. These houses had extensive back gardens with a few Chinar trees and flower beds. The interior of specially bed rooms, *kani* were very ornamental, with stone tiles on floors and engraved wooden panelled ceilings, walnut furniture, carpeted floors, ornamental wood work in windows and doors. In fact the interior reflected a richness of taste and luxurious living style of this class of gentry.

The common man's house, though similar in plan, was small in scale, with a plainer interior and not much open space around. The interiors were mud plastered and the houses were mostly overcrowded. But all houses were well lighted and ventilated.

The floating houses were the house-boats, which belonged to a large section of boatmen who made their living by transporting goods, etc. and who carried people from one place to another through the river Jhelum, which flows throughout the length of Srinagar and its outskirts. These house-boats were modest, self-sufficient in function, properly roofed, and used as permanent abodes of these people. The banks of the Jhelum were all linked up with these house-boats, each having a couple of small boats or *shikharas* tied to them. These house-boats were sometimes owned by the richer folks also, who used them occasionally for their personal commuting in large groups. However comparatively, their house-boats were very richly laid up with exquisite floor coverings and interior details.

Though in this article an attempt has been made to trace the gradual development of building design, art and construction over the ages, there is another important aspect, i.e., the growth of the city of Srinagar and other towns around, the role of Jhelum in the development of the city, which needs to be mentioned but is beyond the scope of the article.

Chapter 7

TEMPLES BUILT IN WATER

B.M. PANDE and G.S. GAUR

Kashmir has various temples built on hilltops or plateaus formed out of the lake deposits locally called *wuḍars* or *karewas*. It has also some very interesting temples built in water. The most famous among them is the Kheer Bhavānī, 4 kms. west of Gandarbal near the village, Tulamul. The ancient name of Tulamul is Tulamulya which is mentioned in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* composed by him between A.D. 1148 and 1150. The large spring of Tulamul is sacred as the habitation of Mahārājñī, a form of Durgā extensively worshipped by the Hindus of Kashmir. To this day, the object of frequent and popular pilgrimages, it is believed to exhibit from time to time miraculous changes in the colour of its water ascribed to the manifestation of the goddess.

The legend about Kheer Bhavānī is as follows: The goddess Pārvatī jumped into the sea when Śiva, while observing the *saṃskāra* of *griha-praveśa* of Laṅkā, built by Kubera for him in gold, gave as *dāna* or charity to Rāvaṇa disguised as a *purohita* or priest. Pārvatī—as the legend goes—was rescued by Hanumāna and brought to Tulamul. She manifested herself when Mahārājā Pratāp Singh (1885-1925) had a dream of the goddess. It was only then that the sanctity of the place was made public.

It is also interesting to note that the literal meaning of the word Tulamul is the “root of the mulberry tree”,

tula meaning 'mulberry' and *mūla* is 'root' in Sanskrit. According to the legend, the goddess was residing in the roots of this tree which was seen by Mahārājā Pratāp Singh while visiting this site for the first time.

Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* also refers to the *Purohita* corporation of Tulamulya which was a well-to-do and influential body already under the King Jayāpīḍa (circa A.D. 751-782). Sir Aurel Stein, who published the translation of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* with detailed notes containing copious information, says that Abul-Fazl in his *Āin-i-Akbari* has also noticed the place and its marshy surroundings.

The temple of Kheer Bhawānī has completely been renovated in recent times in marble. In their zeal, the renovators have also introduced new ornamental features, including a modern canopy. Originally, it must have been a small shrine, the details of which we can only surmise on the basis of other similar shrines built in water in the Kashmir Valley.

Among the earliest such shrines in water in Kashmir, the best-preserved is the Śiva temple at Pandrethan on the south-eastern outskirts of Srinagar in the Cantonment area. It is perhaps the largest in size in comparison to similar other shrines, barring perhaps the temple at Lodav about which we shall say presently. The modern name Pandrethan is derived from the ancient appellation 'Purāṇādhishṭhāna', which literally means the 'old capital'. Pandrethan, thus, represents the site of the ancient capital Śrinagarī, believed to have been founded by the great Maurya emperor Aśoka (circa 273-36 B.C.). With the shifting of the capital to the adjoining site of present Srinagar, the ancient Śrinagarī came to be known as Purāṇādhishṭhāna (old capital). According to Kalhaṇa, the town of Śrinagarī built by Aśoka had 'ninety-six lakhs of houses resplendent with wealth'.

The Śiva temple at Pandrethan is important because it is intact and preserves almost all its original features. Built in the midst of a square tank fed by perennial springs, the temple at Pandrethan is datable to about early tenth century A.D. The temple stands on a fairly high platform most of which generally remains submerged. In fact, earlier, the floor of the sanctum was under knee-deep water before the present arrangement was made for partial draining out the water. The temple is of modest dimensions and "impresses one by the virtue of its structural propriety, symmetry and restraint of ornamentation." The temple is made of ashlar stone masonry and faces west. It is *triratha* in plan like its platform. However, from inside the temple is square. Each of its central projection has a door opening. The walls of the temple are plain except the projecting pilasters on the corners. An impressive and interesting feature of this temple is the high-pitched pyramidal roof made of horizontal courses. The roof itself is divided into two tiers or storeys. Likewise, the entrance-doorways have a triangular pediment resting on two pilasters. Inside the pediment is a trefoil arch. Within this arch on the front side is carved the figure of *Lakuliṣa*. The ceiling of the temple is exquisitely and effectively carved and presents a contrast to the plain, bare walls of the temple. The coiling, made of nine stone slabs, is arranged in oversailing courses; in the lowest course are pairs of garland-bearers; the middle course having flying *Vidyādharas* and in the centre a full-blown lotus with twelve petals on the topmost square. The *liṅga*, in its sanctum is a modern installation. The temple is ascribed to Meruvardhana who was a minister of Pārtha (A.D. 906-921) of the Utpala dynasty.

Perhaps the earliest among the temples built in water is the Śiva temple at Lodav or Ladhu in district Pulwama, 23 kms. south-east of Srinagar. The temple is

an unostentatious structure which is externally square and circular from inside. It is located in the midst of a tank. Except for an entrance-doorway with its pediment resting over two pilasters, it seems to be quite different both in plan and in appearance from other temples of Kashmir. The Lodav temple has only a single entrance on the western side. It might have had a domical ceiling built of projecting courses of blocks of limestone locally termed as *Kañjūr*. It is considered to be perhaps the oldest surviving example of the Kashmir temple architecture. About its roof, we are not certain; we could however make a reasonable guess that it was perhaps identical to the double pyramidal roof which was common to almost all temples of Kashmir.

Equally interesting is the small temple in the Manasbal lake. The lake is mentioned by the name of Manasa (Saras) in the *Nilamata Purāṇa* and by Jonarāja in his *Dvītiya Rājatarāṅgiṇī*. The lake is about 3 km or three-and-a-half kilometres long, and occupying a rock-basin, is deeper than the other lakes in Kashmir. It is connected with the Jhelum river by a short channel and is partially fed by an irrigation canal carried into it from the Sind river. The canal is ascribed by Jonarāja to Zain-ul-ābidīn.

This temple preserves the double pyramidal roof and entrance doorway. The lower half of the temple is submerged in water of the lake, on the northern shore of which it is situated. The temple also carries above the entrance door, inside a trefoil arch, a seated figure which could perhaps be that of Lakuliśa recalling similar figure in the Pandrethan temple. Being submerged in water, it is not possible to know the details of its ceiling. The temple has been made out of only two massive blocks of stone. The lower portion comprising the body of the temple upto its lower pyramidal roof has been carved out of a single stone, while the upper pyramidal roof

was fashioned out of another stone. This temple may roughly be contemporaneous with the temple at Pandrethan and may be dated to about tenth century A.D.

The smallest shrine in water in Kashmir is at Pattan which is about 30 kms. to the north-west to Srinagar. It has also been mentioned as Śaṅkarapura in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* and also by Kshemendra in his *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*. Pattan figures as a separate *parganā* in Abu-l-Fazl's list. Kalhaṇa refers to it as a local centre. Pattan perhaps owes its name to its location on the water route and might have been a port in ancient times, as the name also signifies.

The temple in water at Pattan is located a few metres to the south-west of the Śaṅkaragaurīśvara temple, on the Srinagar-Uri National Highway at Pattan. It is a miniature temple in water confined in three reservoirs of a *bāoli* which is a later construction. This temple is built of three stones only. The top stone is now missing. It is square externally and is open on all sides.

Kashmir also has temples which were built near a tank. Kother, ancient Kapateśvara, which is about 4 kms. above Achhabal is a fine example of this category. The circular tank here is said to have been built by the Paramāra king Bhoja (A.D. 1010-1050) who had also built the magnificent Śiva temple on the shore of the mighty lake near Bhopal. This temple, for reasons not known, remained incomplete.

In Kashmir, the tradition of building temples in water is a living one. It is best exemplified by the modern temple called *Lokabhavana* at Larikapur which is located beyond Anantnag on the Anantnag-Verinag road.

Although the tradition of building temples amidst water was in vogue in almost all parts of the country, the tradition in Kashmir is unique. At other places in

India where temples were built amidst lake waters, ponds, etc., these were built as if on an island. The architects of ancient Kashmir took up the challenging task of building temples in water. They succeeded in creating and giving them sometime the appearance of a temple emerging out of the waters. This is the feeling one gets particularly on seeing the temple at Manasbal. Sculpting portions of the temple out of massive blocks of stone, either two or three in number, was also perhaps a device used in such constructions. This also helped overcome the difficulty of building layer by layer as in masonry construction. Such constructions are best exemplified by the temples at Pattan and Manasbal where three and two massive stone blocks have been used respectively in the construction of these temples in water.

Chapter 8

LADAKH : A DWINDLING HERITAGE

H.N. KAUL

The Himalayan region of Ladakh, despite its rugged exterior, can rightly boast of a rich cultural heritage. Even in the face of its isolation from civilizing influences for centuries, the region is amazingly rich in the artistic endowments of its people which are fashioned after their inherent Buddhist ethos. The fields in which Buddhists of Ladakh have attained excellence are briefly described below.

SCULPTURE

The sculptor's art in Ladakh has attained a high degree of excellence as testified by the images carved out of stone or metal by its gifted artists. To mention a few cases, the 18 feet high image of the Maitreya Buddha or the Buddha-to-come at Mulbek carved out of a rock in the standing posture displays a symmetry of form and features and an expression that cannot but wake admiration of the beholder. The three-storey high image of Sakyamuni Buddha in the sitting posture at Shey, the other earlier capital of Ladakh, is a specimen of rare artistic excellence. The proportions of different parts of its body are delicately cut and the ecstatic expression of the eyes is so perfect that it makes the spectator gape in wonder. The Sankar Gompa in the outskirts of Leh town houses an equally prodigious image of the Bodhisattva exhibiting the same artistic genius. In the religious Alchi complex, there are Buddhas with

their feet on the ground floor and heads emerging at the third floor—an incredible sight indeed. The other *Gompas* of the region abound in similar images testifying to the dizzy heights attained by Ladakhis in the domain of sculpture.

PAINTING

It is a unique phenomenon that almost every Ladakhi Buddhist is a born artist and takes to the brush as fish to water. One really wonders at the excellence of the murals in the *Gompas* and the Thangka paintings drawn on canvas by these mature artists depicting things of philosophical and secular import. The main worship room of a *Gompa* houses the images of the Buddha, the coming-Buddha and some other celebrities of the Buddhist hierarchy. The walls of the room bear murals depicting important events in the numerous lives of the Buddha and pictorially represent salient tenets of Buddhism. The vast religious Alchi complex is particularly an irresistible attraction with its mural paintings, *Stupas*, places of worship and dark rooms pulsating with life.

ARCHITECTURE

The massive structure of Ladakh's *Gompas* are specimens of Buddhist architecture and the abode of monks and nuns whose number runs into hundreds. Here to the achievement of the Ladakhi Buddhists is considerable, as the massive architecture of the magnificent *Sangha* shows. The three jewels of Buddhism are the *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*. The Order of Monks is the third jewel in the Buddhist hierarchy and the *Gompa* is the casket which contains and preserves this jewel. For propagation of the Dharma, it has been an age-old practice in Ladakh to dedicate a younger son or daughter to the *Gompa* to which the family owes allegiance. The age-limit for sending a boy or girl to a monastery though not fixed, their admission used to take place at a very early age. But with the spread of

education, exposure of people to modernisation and the consequent change in values, now only a selected people join monastic life mostly on attaining discretion and feeling an inner urge for a life of purity and altruistic activity. This selective admission to monastic life will help preserve the time-tested teachings of Lord Buddha and in dispelling darkness.

The Ladakhis' infatuation with western ideas and lifestyles is natural and understandable, but it should not be at the expense of their own tradition and impairment of their cultural heritage. In other words, the Ladakhis should resist the temptation of rejecting their traditions, social values, bonds of family relationship and their great culture. For instance, a farmer's conscious understanding of his life was never put to the test. He ploughed his fields and harvested his crops as his forefathers had done before him and never needed to question why and how the traditions he practised had taken roots. He trusted their wisdom without ever having to know why. The modern techniques and ways are posing a challenge to his traditional ways and he needs answers to questions which never bothered him earlier.

Ladakh is gradually undergoing fundamental changes due to the impact of western culture, which is sweeping the region and is gradually replacing the age-old traditions. The impact of clash between external forces and tradition can be seen more clearly in the life of the younger generation in Leh. However most Ladakhis still endeavour to remain rooted to their tradition. If the outside world continues to intrude on the sensibilities of region as it does now, it will not be too long before its rare cultural heritage will vanish.

IMPENDING THREAT

The region cannot remain isolated or immune to the forces of modernisation indefinitely. However, this should not prompt Ladakhis to reconcile to the crumbling of their social and spiritual moorings and make them ultimately forsake their

culture and religion and its great ethos. To avert such a catastrophe, the Ladakhis should opt for a synthesis between modernisation and tradition ensuring that the future of the region is secure and the traditional personality of the people does not suffer impairment. True, Ladakh cannot afford a policy of isolation, but it has at the same time to ensure that the age-old infrastructure of its society and spiritual attitudes towards life do not suffer drastically. In this connection, it is important that *Bodhi*, the mother tongue of the people, is not only preserved but developed as a language which is an integral part of a culture. Knowledge of English may be essential for the Ladakhi youth, but the importance of their mother-tongue should not be underestimated by them.

VALUES and BEHAVIOUR

The human values which Ladakh once cherished are under stress and enlightened Buddhists look upon it as a major blow to Ladakh's ethos. Jealousy and negative competition are rampant. Earlier crime was unheard of in the region nor was there an discrimination in terms of religion, caste or sex. Each individual was important for the society in which his contribution was equally valuable. Even though there is virtually no crime in Ladakh today, but corruption is gradually penetrating into this earstwhile chaste society and the compulsions of modern life have made the people self-centred and oblivious of what is happening around them. The impact of the forces of development and exposure to the excesses of modern age are manifest in the change in the values and in the people's behaviour which does not seem to be in accord with their ethos. The Ladakhis having lived away from outside influences for centuries had once impressed Frederic Drew as a lot "much given to truth-telling". But now truth-telling is not considered a great virtue as things have considerably changed over the years. Heinrich Harrer, another close observer of Ladakh, attributes the change to the clash there between the

Western civilization which has brought about phenomenal scientific achievements and the ancient world with its sober life that ensures eternal harmony. The enlightened Ladakhis are fully aware of the threat that looms large in their land. They should accept the challenge realistically and fight it out with a resolute will. Such an approach could help them fight the negative consequences of modernisation like mechanical rejection by the youth of social values, the breakdown of social relationships consequent upon abolition of the joint family system and the abandonment of *Dharma*. In fact, a section of the younger generation also feels concerned about deterioration in their social behaviour and the need for remedial steps. Let the well-wishers of Ladakh, therefore, hope that the Ladakhi youth would keep aloft their traditions and cherished values in the face of the turbulent cultural cross-currents buffeting them and not let Ladakh's rich heritage languish.

SPRITUALITY

Chapter 9

RELEVANCE OF SPANDA SYSTEM OF KASHMIR SAIVISM IN THE PRESENT AGE

KOSHELYA WALLI

Kashmir Saivism has an important place in the history of Indian philosophy. *Spanda* system is mainly based on *Spandakarikas*. There is difference of opinion about the authorship of the *Spandakarika* amongst the scholars. Kshemaraja attributes this work to Acharya Vasugupta, the originator of *Shiva Sutras*, but Bhaskara and Bhatta Utpala are of the opinion that the *Spandakarika* is written by Bhatta Kallatta, who was a disciple of Acharya Vasugupta. He learned Kashmir Saivism directly at the feet of his master.

Meaning of the word 'Spanda': Literally the word '*Spanda*' means movement or throb, but as applied to the divine, it means the throb of the divine I-consciousness (*Vimarsha*). It is the Divine Creative Realisation. It is the throb of Siva's absolute freedom (*Svatantrya*).

The light of consciousness does not change in the least, yet it appears to be changing as it were. The immovable appears as if having a variety of manifestation.¹

Spanda is, therefore, spiritual dynamism without any movement in itself but serving as the cause of all movements.

Spanda is another name of self-awareness or *Vimarsha*.

According to Kshemaraja, *Spanda* also connotes *Svatantrya*, *Vimarsa*, *Parashakti*, *Sara*, *Hrdaya Spanda*.

The present state of the world (humanity): Today, we find in all countries of the world absence of peace—individual peace, family peace, social peace and last but not the least, peace amongst human beings. What we find outside is virtually the reflection of what we are inside. But to understand it in our day-to-day life, requires some code of conduct, discipline. In an intense emotional state, all the mental activities come to a dead stop. That is the time when one can have an experience of the *Spanda* principle if one is properly oriented towards it.²

Thus, *Spanda* can be termed as Siva's dynamic aspect, which is identical with the essential self of each and with the whole universe.³ Since the limited individual self is identical with the whole universe as all entities arise from him and because of the knowledge of all subjects; has the feeling of identity with them all, hence, whether, in the word, object or thought, there is no state, which is not Siva. It is the experient himself who always and everywhere abides in the form of the experienced i.e. it is the Divine Will itself who is the essential experient, and, it is He who abides in the form of the universe as his field of experience. Since his teaching begins with *Jiva* experience and ends with *Siva*; it teaches by way of suggestion that there is no essential difference between *Jiva* and *Siva*. In other words, one should not regard oneself as imperfect in any state like body etc; rather one should consider oneself as of the nature of *Siva* who is a compact mass of consciousness. This is further elaborated in *Pratyabhijna Tika*. According to it, even those who perceive the body as comprising thirty-six categories (तत्त्व) in the form of *Siva*, and treat it with respect, acquire spiritual perfection, and also those who investing even jar, etc., with the form of *Siva* perceive it in that light and honour it, will acquire spiritual perfection. There is no difference of opinion on this point.⁴

Thus, when one is able to identify with the whole universe, there cannot be jealousy, ill will, greed, lust and the

like for anyone, for such an individual finds his own self everywhere and in all, and as such feels for others sorrow, grief, adversity, etc. If such an attitude to life is developed, the world would be really a place of peace, harmony, mutual understanding, tolerance, cooperation and coordination. The whole world is a play for such an individual who identifies himself with the whole world, and is liberated while in the body.⁵

The absorption into the *Spanda* principle for the manifestation of the state of the fully-illuminated *Yogi* has been conclusively explained which is to be brought about by both introversive (निमीलन) and extroversive (उन्मीलन) meditation, both of which are to be interpenetrative, i.e., the inner experience of the Divine has to be experienced externally also and the external experience of the Divine has to be experienced internally also.

Man established in *Spanda* can see things in whichever form, whichever place or time, in whichever state becomes manifest to him who resorts to the power of *Spanda*.⁶ Just as a thing which, in spite of all the attentiveness of the mind, is perceived indistinctly at first appears more distinctive, later when observed with the strenuous exercise of one's power, so when one resorts to the power of *spanda*, then whatever thing actually exists in whichever form, in whichever place or time in whichever state, that thing becomes manifest at once in that very way.⁷ Hunger can be overcome by resorting to the power of *Spanda*. A feeble person succeeds in doing what has to be done. Just as all knowledgeability in respect of the body occurs when it is pervaded by the *Spanda* principle, even so when the *yogi* is established in his essential self, he will have omniscience everywhere.⁸

In this age of materialism, man identifies his consciousness of bliss to his body, and is deprived of real bliss/delight. Consequently, individually, socially, officially, politically—in every sphere of life, depression saps the vitality of the जीव (experient).⁹

When the mind of a person/aspirant that is to quit one object is firmly established (निरुद्ध), and does not move towards any other object, it comes to rest in a middle position and through it (i.e., the middle position) is unfolded the realisation of pure consciousness which transcends all contemplation.¹⁰

The person who has not yet segregated the identification of the self with the body sees from the supernormal light, the supernormal sound, the supernormal form and the supernormal taste. These are, however, only disturbing factors in the full realization of the *Spanda* principle.¹¹ On the other hand, when established in meditation, he finds Siva both within and without.¹² He sees every object as an expression of the inner divine self. Then the delusion of diversity disappears, and he was the bliss of unity consciousness. *Spanda* is our own essential self. If we make a sincere effort to remain awake and deposit everything in one place, i.e., see *spanda* in everything, then we are never troubled by the other.¹³ Since the whole universe is said to be the form of Siva, who is it that gives trouble and who is it that is troubled? Being deprived of his glory by *Kala* that reduces the *mityla*..... (limited efficacy) the case of *Pasu* of the empirical individual of Siva to he is unable to consider himself in his real nature. He becomes a victim of the group of powers arising from the multitude of words, and, thus, he is known as the bound one (*Pasu*).¹⁴

The rise of all the ideas in the bound soul marks the disappearance of the bliss of the supreme immortality. On account of this, he loses his independence. The appearance of the ideas has its sphere in sense objects.¹⁵ Powers are everready to conceal the real nature of an individual for without the association of words, ideas cannot arise.¹⁶ According to Ksemaraja, the same supreme I-consciousness of the Lord manifesting within itself this universe of diverse objects as if moving, is here referred to as *Spanda*, according to etymological derivation : *spandare iti spandah*— "that which throbs (with life) is spanda". Thus, when the Lord, veiling by way of sport the real nature of his self adorned with the

Highest Power (*Parasakti*) endowed with universal energy, desires to display manifestation in different forms, then His Power of Absolute Freedom becomes two in the form of (Vowel) and (Consonant) which respectively indicate *Siva* and *Sakti*. It also appears as ninefold according to the division of the letter groups (वर्गभेद) and fiftyfold according to the division of the letters of these groups. Appearing in the form of the Goddesses *Aghora*, *Ghora* and *Ghoraratri*, who comprehend these letters, it brings about the fivefold act of the Lord.

The empirical individual is bound and does not remember his essential nature. He becomes an instrument of ideas. His ideas lead him to sense objects and the pleasure derived from them. The ideas are fully governed by words, and words have a tremendous power over his life. He becomes completely oblivious of his true self. The thoughts, the ideas and the words do not permit him to look within. He is conditioned. The essential self is unconditioned. The unconditioned cannot be known by the conditioned. The individual when he frees himself from the shackles of ideas and words, is free to have an immediate direct awareness of self.

The *Spandakarika* in the above mentioned last three verses, quoted in this paper, intends to show that liberation is identical with the recognition of *spanda*, and bondage is identical with its non-recognition operative power that is one's own real nature i.e. nature of consciousness identical with *Siva* has been called इयम्—this. That power is *Spanda*. She is known as operative power (*Kriya Sakti*), as she brings about the state of variety of the universe when the empirical individual recognizes this operation power as the Supreme Power (*Para Sakti*), as the means of approach to his real nature which is *Siva*, she brings about the highest achievement full of supreme bliss.¹⁷

Being centred in *Puryastaka* which rises from *tanmatras* and exists in mind, I-feeling and intellect—the determinative faculty, the bound-soul (*Pasu*) becomes subservient to ideas about certain objects and the pleasure or pain that accrues from

them. Due to the continuance of the पुरष्टिक, the bound soul transmigrates time and again. When by incessant practice, he becomes fully and unshakingly established in the *spanda tattva*—the Perfect I-consciousness—he becomes identical with it, he controls the emergence and dissolution of the *Puryastaka* as also of the universe by means of meditation, he becomes the real enjoyer and therefrom the Lord of the collective whole of the *Saktis*.¹⁸

Thus, in the present state of individual, domestic, social, official, national and political circumstances, the *spanda* system of Kashmir Saivism inspires us not to look to others, to the so-called Government, but to our own selves to improve our own lot and consequently, the lot of others.

In this manner, if we care to grasp the underlying sum and substance of Kashmir Saivism, surely the world would be a better place to live in.

References

1. स्पन्दनं च किञ्चित् चलनम्। एषैव च किञ्चिद्रूपता यद् अचलमपि चलम् आभासते इति। प्रकाशस्वरूपं हि मनागपि नातिरिच्यते, अतिरिच्यते इव इति अचलभेद आभासभेदयुक्तमेव च भाति इति। (ईश्वर प्रत्यभिज्ञा-प. 208, V.I. 5, 14).
2. अतिवरुद्धः प्रहृष्टो वा किं करोमीति वा ग शन्। धांवन्वा यत्पदं गच्छेत् तत्र स्पन्दः प्रतिष्ठतः ॥ 22 ॥ *Spandakarika* Section-I.
3. यस्मात् सर्वमयो जीवः सर्वभावोसमुद्भवात्। तत्त्वसंवेदनरूपेण तादात्म्यप्रतिपत्तिः ॥ 3 ॥
तस्माच्छब्दार्थं चिन्तासु न सावस्था न या शिवः।
भोक्तैवभोग्यभावेन सदा सर्वत्र संस्थितः ॥ 4 ॥ *Spandakarika* Section-II.
4. जीव इत्युपक्रम्य शिव इत्युपसंहारेण जीवशिवयोऽस्ति तो न कोऽपि भेदः - इति देहाद्यवस्थासु न कास्युचिदप्यपूर्णमन्यता मन्तव्या, अपितु चिद्धन शिवस्वभातैवेति भङ्गयोपदिशति यथोक्तम्—“शरीरमपि ये

षट्त्रिंशत्तत्त्वमयं शिवदपतया पश्यति अर्चयन्ति च ते सिद्धयन्ति
घटादिकमपि तथाभिनिविश्य पश्यन्ति अर्चयन्ति च तेऽपीति नास्त्यत्र
विवादः — इति श्रीप्रत्यभिज्ञा टीकायाम् ।

5. इति वा यस्य संविन्तिः क्रीडात्वेनाखिलं जगत् । स पश्यन्सततं युक्तो
जीवन्मुक्तो न संशयः ॥ २ ॥ *Spandakarika* Section II

6. यथा ह्यथोऽस्फुटो दृष्टः सावधानेऽपि चेतसि ।

सूयः स्फुटतरो भाति स्वबलोद्योगभावितः ॥ ४ ॥

तथा यत्परमार्थेन येन यत्र यथास्थितम् ।

तत्तथा बलमाक्रम्य न चिरात्संप्रवर्तते ॥ ५ ॥ *Spandakarika*
Section III.

7. दुर्बलोऽपि तदाक्रम्य यतः कार्ये प्रवर्तते ।

आच्छादयेद् बुभुक्षां च तथा योऽति बुसुक्षितः ॥ ६ ॥

Spandakarika Section

8. अनेनाधिष्ठिते देहे यथा सर्वज्ञतादयः ।

तथा स्वात्मन्याधिष्ठानात् सर्वत्र च भविष्यति ॥ ७ ॥

9. ग्लानिर्विलुप्तका देहे तस्याश्चाज्ञानतः सतिः ।

तदुन्मेषविलुप्तं चेत्कुतः सा स्यादेहतुका ॥ ८ ॥

10. भावे त्यक्ते निरुद्धा चिन्नैव भाषान्तरं प्रजेत् ।

तथा तन्मध्यभावेन विकसत्यतिभावना ॥ (वि. भै. ६२)

11. अतो विन्दुरतो नादो रूपमस्मादतो रसः ।

प्रवर्तन्तेऽचिरेणैव क्षोभकत्वेन देहिनः ॥ S.k. 3 10 ॥

12. दिहक्षयेव सर्वार्थान्यदा व्याप्यावतिष्ठते ।

तदा किं बहुनोक्तेन स्वयमेवावभोत्स्यते ॥ S.k. III. 10 ॥

13. प्रबुद्धा सर्वदा तिष्ठेज्ज्ञानेनालोक्य गोचरम् ।

एकत्रारोपयेत् सर्वं ततोऽन्येन न पीडयते ॥ S.k. VI. 12. ॥

14. शब्दराशि समुत्थस्य शक्तिवर्गस्य भोग्यताम् ।

कलाविलुप्तविभवो गतः सन्स पशुः स्मृतः ॥ S.K. III. 13. ॥

(एषैव भगवत इयद्विश्ववैचित्र्यचलत्तामिव स्वात्मनि प्रथयन्ती स्पन्दते
इत्यर्थानुगमात् स्पन्द इति इहोच्यते । एवं चेयद्विश्वशक्तिखचितपराशक्ति
सुन्दरस्य स्वात्मनः स्वरूपगोपनक्रीडया स्वात्मभित्तावेवांशाशिकतया
जियार्सनं भगवान् यावच्चिकीर्षीति तावदेकैवाभिन्नाप्यसौ तदीया

विमर्शशक्तिरिच्छत्वं प्रतिपद्य ज्ञानक्रियारूपतया स्थित्वा
शिवशक्तिपरामर्शतमाबीजयोनिभेदेन द्विधत्भूत्वा वर्गभेदेन तत्कलाभेदेन
च नवधा पञ्चाशद्वा च स्फुरन्ती तद्विमर्शसारैरघोरघोरतरैः
संवित्तिदेवतात्मभिः रूपैः प्रथमाना भगवतः पञ्चबोध कृत्यकारितां
निर्वहति ।) क्षेमराजभाष्यम्

15. परामृत रसापायस्तस्य यः प्रत्ययोद्भवः ।
तेनास्वतन्त्रामेति स च तन्मात्रगोचरैः ।। S.K. 3 10 ।।
16. स्वरूपावरणे चास्य शक्तयः सततोत्थिताः ।
यतः शब्दानुवेधेन न विजना, प्रत्ययोद्भवः ।। S.K. 3 15 ।।
17. सेयं क्रियात्मिका शक्तिः शिवस्य पशुवर्तिनी ।
बन्धयित्री स्वमार्गस्था ज्ञाता सिद्ध्युपपादिका ।। S.K. III 16 ।।
18. यदा त्वेकत्र संरूढस्तदा तस्य लयोदयौ ।
नियच्छन्भोक्त तामेति ततश्चक्रेश्वरो भवेत् ।। S.K. III 19 ।।

Chapter 10

NANDA BAB—A GREAT MYSTIC OF KASHMIR

MOTI LAL BHAT

Kashmir over the ages has had a galaxy of sages and saints who dominated spiritual and secular life far and wide and guided common people towards the ultimate truth.

Ishwarswaroop Paramaswami Nandlal Ji Sahib Kaul was one of the great saints of Kashmir. He appeared as a youth on the spiritual scene of Kashmir and strode it for well over 50 years like a gentle colossus, leaving behind indelible imprints on the paths he trod, the places he visited and the people who joined his spiritual congregations.

For his humane qualities of head and heart, he was popularly called by the homely name of 'Nandabab'. In spoken Kashmiri language 'Nanda' is an abbreviation of the name Nandalal and 'Bab' means father. That was the profundity of the reverence which his devotees had for him.

Peculiarly dressed as he always used to be, Nandabab did not, from his outward appearance, seem to the uninitiated to be what he in reality was to the initiated.

The knowledge of the changing multitude and of the imperishable changeless reality, the spiritual unity and solidarity of all existence, the one behind the many without a prior or posterior, had fully blossomed in the Eden of his inner self. He was a universal man—a '*Vishvapurusha*', integrated within and without.

Himself having risen from mortal to the immortal status of existence, Nandabab ever endeavoured to lead his devotees from the phenomenal world of appearances to the realm of reality; from darkness of unawareness to the light of awareness; from lower nature '*apara prakriti*' to higher nature '*para prakriti*'.

While doing so, he did not lose sight of the meaning and importance of life in the world. The inviolable relationship between the cosmic reality and the individual soul was well known to him. He had an intelligent understanding of being a man first and then being a saint. It is true wordliness, which on fruition leads to godliness, was lucidly clear to this man of supreme knowledge—the '*mahagyani*', and he boldly acted upon this unifying message of the *Upanishads*.

Always wearing a mystic smile which spoke volumes about the divine ecstasy of his transformed being, Nandabab the man of the epoch—the '*yugapurusha*' attracted thousands of people, from far and wide, yearning for his blessings for the protection from major trials and tribulations, crises and conflicts, in which worldly valour and wisdom are of no avail.

Those who came to him were people of all faiths, castes, creeds and social status. Unnatural dividers had no meaning or relevance, whatsoever, for this great man—the *mahapurusha*. He poured forth love in abundance to all. Hindus and Muslims revered him alike. It was a sight to see how even highly placed Muslims treated Nandabab with absolute faith and veneration.

Nandabab had a profound sense of observation. All that came his way did not go unnoticed by him. He would react in his own inimitable ways to what he saw. Abject poverty, despondency, destitution and deprivation invariably moved him. He would always express his deep concern for the suffering, and work in his own subtle ways for their upliftment. His soothing words acted as an elixir for them.

As a clairvoyant he saw visions with the clarity of the one high up in the hierarchy of the spiritually accomplished. He made prophetic pronouncements, sometimes talking in

parables, similies, metaphors and through the language of gestures, but generally dictating on chits of paper his pithy words in his own—‘addressing Paul what is intended for Peter’—“*tse kin valith mye kun*” style of communication. It would either be replies to the unrevealed mental queries of individuals or point to social or political events to follow.

Once a devotee and his America-based brother on their return from the health resort of Pahalgam in Kashmir, while passing through a village called Bhavan, came to know about the presence of Nandabab in that village. The devotee could not resist his inner call to pay obeisance to the saint. Making enquiries, both of them went straight to the house of a villager where Nandabab had halted. They were still at the threshold when the saint looking towards this devotee and nodding his head said : “Well, must you have performed the last rites?”

The devotee got upset. He became panicky for he mentally interpreted the saint’s words as some sort of untoward happening in his family. However, he kept his cool. After paying their obeisance, he and his brother took leave and left for their home at Srinagar.

Everything was normal at home. Next day the news spread that at a place in Pahalgam a massive cloudburst had washed away, down the slope of a hillock, a number of hovels and huts alongwith the inmates, causing heavy loss of life and property.

Usually Nandabab’s movements were unpredictable. Way back in the sixtees, he once left Srinagar for Delhi on a certain mission. On reaching Old Delhi Railway Station, he suddenly changed his mind and asked his whole-time attendant disciple to arrange for a horse-cart for going to the residence in Old Delhi of a lady whom he named with paternal feeling. The disciple knew the lady as the daughter of a pious family of Tankipora Mohalla in Srinagar with whom Nandabab had lived, as a son of the household, for about a decade of his initial shining out. But he did not know the Delhi address of the lady, and without the address it was impossible to locate the lady

in a big city like Delhi. Had Nandabab given the slightest inkling to him before their departure from Srinagar, he would have collected the Delhi address of the lady, the disciple thought with himself. But that was not done. He mentioned his difficulty to Nandabab. Nandabab insisted. A horse-cart was arranged. Nandabab seated himself next to the cart-driver and guided him all through from area to area, colony to colony, street to street, lane to lane, till they reached the particular house at Shaktinagar in Old Delhi where the lady and her husband resided.

That was Nandabab and his spiritual insight.

At the spiritual level, Nandabab seemed to have been assigned the paramount seat of the perceptible aspect of power as a kinetic force by the whole host of contemporary mystics, which he manifested as and when required. He had been accorded the epithet of 'Supreme Commander of Peace'. The rise and fall of governments in Jammu and Kashmir State, social changes, political developments and many other aspects of major significance were under the orb of his spiritual influence. It is incredible, but that is the truth.

It is amazing that even before the Jammu and Kashmir Government had thought of working out the modalities of the land-to-tiller policy pronounced after independence, Nandabab, as *amicus humani generis*—a friend of humanity—had issued his commandment *A Hukumnama* on chits of paper, distributed then in hundreds, spelling out the *modus operandi* of distribution of land from the landlord and the tiller. The '*hukumnama*' read—"Yak Hissa Wa Hardu Hissa Hawal". That was Nandabab's prophetic vision.

During Pakistan's invasion on Kashmir in 1947, as Pakistani forces advanced and organised their forward movement to besiege the city of Srinagar; to capture the only airport, a few kilometres from the city, Nandabab rose like the force of light to destroy the force of darkness. He got going like a giant to repulse the incursion. In the top-floor balcony of a house in Tankipora Mohalla in Srinagar, where he was

staying those days with a family, Nandabab fixed pieces of household firewood in different directions, symbolising artillery power, which he himself manoeuvred frequently changing their position and direction. He shouted. His shouts sounded like war cries. He roared. His roar was like the roar of clouds. He swiftly moved hither and thither making strange gesticulations. The panic-stricken onlookers, watching Nandabab in action, interpreted his movements according to their individual understanding.

Circumambulating the big fire, which he had lit in the courtyard of the same house, he looked furious beyond description. From there, he went back to the balcony and sharply glanced around as if viewing distant objects from a gazebo. After a pause, he gazed skyward with a mysteriously smiling face, and loudly uttered some typical words which for the understanding ones meant : "invasion thwarted..... invasion thwarted....." Immediately thereafter, it so happened that the Indian armed forces, which were airlifted, landed in full strength at the Srinagar airport, and launched a massive counter-offensive, swiftly pushing back the aggressor.

During the Indo-Pak war, Nandabab repeated the miraculous feat. Standing firm as a rock, under the still more catastrophic conditions, he once again provided impenetrable umbrella of protection to the people of the State. That time Nandabab was putting up in the house of a devotee at Dewan Bagh in Srinagar. One day he started showing signs of alarm. His close devotees and disciples, who were present, asked him about the immediate cause of his extra anxiety. He did not mention it, but asked them in a commanding tone to light instantly holy fire in the courtyard and to prepare oblatinal food which he wanted them to keep ready by a certain hour of the afternoon of the next day. The devotees and disciples followed the command. The holy fire was lit then and there, and preparatory work for the oblatinal food was started the same day.

Next day as the word spread, a large number of devotees thronged the place with their offerings. All these offerings were consigned to the holy fire as and when brought. As the indicated hour approached, two platefuls of the oblatinal food were placed before Nandabab. One of the plates he kept for himself and the other one he asked a devotee to consign to the holy fire which had been alight all through. Almost at the same time, some sabre jets of Pakistan Air Force appeared on the skies of Srinagar and hovered around, the airport being their principal target. But their mission was foiled and design frustrated.

Again during the 1971 Bangladesh war, Nandabab exerted at the metaphysical plane, bringing into action, in his own way, his supernatural powers for the overall good of the humanity. He stretched his ethereal personality to re-establish true humanity with re-inforced foundation of moral and spiritual life. There was nothing credal, dogmatic, parochial or sectarian about it. It was all universal and human. It was broad and inclusive.

Nandabab was ill and confined to bed in his parental house in the village called Nuner. He was unable to move by himself. One day he suddenly asked one of his close disciples to shift him to Srinagar. The disciple was surprised. The saint was sick, why should he have asked to shift him to Srinagar? Apparently there was no reason? But then the disciple did some pondering and concluding that Nandabab would not have asked him for no purpose to move him to Srinagar, he made preparations for Nandabab's departure. On reaching Srinagar, Nandabab was escorted to the residence of a devotee at Karan Nagar, as it was here that he could be given continued medical treatment, a member of the resident family himself being a doctor. Besides there were some proficient doctors practicing in the same locality. But who knew or could know the *fixed* purpose of Nandabab's coming to Srinagar even in sickness. It needed the clear eye of understanding, '*bodhachakshu*' to realise the true form of reality.

While Nandabab had outwardly given himself to medical treatment of his bodily ailment, he was psychically engaged seriously with something behind and beyond the world of appearances, creating a situation for establishing tranquillity and harmony in the temporal life, and living in a part of the world which had been under heavy gunfire for long. The situation was grave. The movement of the seventh fleet of the United States of America had all the more aggravated it. The whole country was tense. In those anxious moments, Nandabab once again intervened. He wielded his sceptre, and majestically asked one of his close disciples to prepare a Kashmiri non-veg delicacy called '*Roganjosh*' and cooked rice. So it was done and offered to Nandabab. He ate some of it. He paused for a while. He looked in all the six directions and observed in a satisfying manner—"everything is alright now."

The following day it was on the air that the Pakistan armed forces in Bangladesh had surrendered *en masse* and the war was over.

Nandabab seldom stayed at his home. He had forsaken his personal comforts. He was a selfless and sublime man of action—a '*karamayogi*'. As a roving ambassador of the Lord of the Universe, he went indefatigably distributing the treasures of higher wisdom in the spirit of service to mankind. The wooden staff in his right hand, the dagger tucked in his waist-band and the big axe on his left shoulder, which he always carried with him, wherever he went, symbolised the Power of Action, the '*kriyashakti*', the divine had vested in him. Ever-established in the beaming bliss of the pure consciousness of the Great Self in him, Nandabab was not an ordinary mortal. He was an embodiment of superhuman acumen and achievements. While living fully in the world of entanglements, he had completely disentangled himself from the meshes of the world like the lotus in a swamp.

Born on the 30th December, 1896, in village Nuner, district Ganderbal, in Kashmir, Nandabab entered '*mahasmadhi*' on the 10th of October, 1973 in the capital city of Delhi. His

mortal remains were reverentially flown to Srinagar for the last rites. Profusely bedecked with bunches of bouquets, wreaths and garlands of flowers of rainbow colours, the gun-carriage carrying the corpse of the saint, everworshipped by his constant devotees—'*nityam ashrit pujitah*', was wheeled round the city of Srinagar on public demand.

Thousands of people in tears of mourning moved, shoulder to shoulder, in the funeral procession chanting from the holy *Srimadbhagwad Gita* and other holy scriptures. Many more, longing for the last glimpse of the One Seated in Godhood—*adhirohah*, showered flowers of obeisance from their windows and house-tops enroute the funeral procession, which was lined up both sides of the road by a vast number of plaintive people. Winding its way through the streets of Srinagar, as the funeral procession reached near the cremation ground, the large number of mourners who had already reached there, for making arrangement for the befitting finale, joined the procession, showering flowers and flowers and flowers, all the way all the time, till the funeral pyre was lit. Some of the mourners prostrated before the pyre, some of them circumambulated the pyre and many others sorrowfully, sobbed—'Oh! our dearly loved Nandabab'—"*Vai! sani tathi Nandababo*". In the forepart of the mourners one could see late Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah with his hands raised in prayer and his head bowed down in reverence.

It was, indeed, an unprecedented spectacle of offering '*shradhanjali*' on the last journey of God's chosen one, never witnessed before in the whole of Kashmir.

That was Nandabab—the Friend of All, '*sarva lalsah*'; the Doer of Good to All, '*sarva shubhankarah*'; the Uplifter of the Poor, '*dinasadhakah*'; Pure in Body, Speech and Mind, '*trishuklah*'. Throughout his worldly existence, he bloomed like a lotus in the lake of ambrosia of *Paramashiva's* Grace whiffing, all the time, all around, in the ethereal form of pleasing fragrance, the message of humility, virtue, uprightness, purity, compassion and humanism.

It was after *mahanirvana* of this eternal and infallible spiritual guide, that some of his disciples organised themselves and established an Ashram at Shalakadal, near Karfali Mohalla in Srinagar. Soon this 'Ashram' hummed with pious activities and became a place of pilgrimage for all.

It is most tormenting even to think that with the hapless eruption of violence and subversion by the Muslim fundamentalists, in the land of Abhinavgupta and Utpalacharya, Vikramaditya and Budshah, Lalded and Sheikh-ul-Alam, who taught tolerance and togetherness, and the consequent displacement of Kashmiri Pandits from their own homeland, the 'Ashram' has become a sanctum of the 'sound of silence'. The roar of the gun has gagged the speech of the sacred. But how long?

Chapter 11

SPIRITUALITY AND THE SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

A.N. DHAR

As I see it, there is not any basic or sharp opposition between what spirituality essentially is and what science stands for. It is quite tenable to conceive of a fair degree of compatibility between the two—the scientific temper is not alien to spirituality nor is a scientist necessarily an atheist or a person with an unspiritual outlook. To an appreciable extent, science and spirituality can be seen to have a common aim—promotion of human values and welfare of mankind in general. Just as disinterested curiosity for the unknown marks the scientific temper, a fervent quest for Truth is often a strong motivation for the spiritual seeker. However, it is evident to all that science is not enough. Its practical applications may serve human needs, make life comfortable and enable man to achieve longevity through control on diseases. But too much dependence—as we have seen—on machines and other scientific gadgets has made life mechanical, not to speak of the havoc wrought on the earth through the abuse of science.

Coming to the precise domain of science as a systematic body of knowledge, its investigations are mostly confined to the physical universe, the world of sensory experience. How does the scientist go about his work? He observes facts and phenomena, analyses them and then arrives at theories and laws. Old theories may be discarded in favour of new ones as research advances and the boundaries of knowledge expand.

Scientific research, on the whole, is a well-coordinated activity, a collective endeavour, not just an individual achievement. That is what Newton meant to convey when he observed, "We stand on the shoulders of other giants". Again, the efforts of scientists are result-oriented; scientific experimentation produces concrete results. Miracles of science are about us today in every walk of life, staring us in the eye.

What about spirituality? The spiritual seeker, by choice, grapples with eternal questions. He has an intense urge to understand the misery of life and death; for him life is not absurd or just the result of an accident. He is concerned with Truth as the ultimate cause, the secret of secrets. It is in this vein that the poet Coventry Patmore of the mid-Victorian period characterizes mysticism (a substitute term for spirituality based on direct experience of the Divine) as "The science of ultimates". Life for the *Yogi* or mystic has a meaning and purpose; he neither discards reason nor trusts it wholly. However, he trusts his own intuitions and finer perceptions because of their spontaneity and authenticity. Drawn to Truth by an inner compulsive urge, he does not rest content until he apprehends the Reality behind appearances or his indwelling Self. Thus he too is an explorer, an earnest seeker engaged in a life-long pursuit of the Divine. Invariably, the spiritual aspirant has to approach a master for help and guidance. In spite of some initial difficulties and hurdles, he finds the Guru who takes him under his spiritual care.

Faith in God and the *Guru* are the essential pre-requisites for a seeker's success in the spiritual path. It is on the solid foundation of faith that he raises the superstructure of *sadhana* involving a vigorous exercise of all his mental powers—of "memory, understanding and will" (as the Christian mystic Ignatius Loyola characterizes a "spiritual exercise"). Until at least a *sadhak* gets established in meditation, he does not discard reason at any point; the onward experience "transcends but does not contradict reason". To the last, the *sadhak* remains thoroughly discriminative and mentally alert. The *Raja Yogi*,

as the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* testify, proceeds on the spiritual path steadily, with extreme care and determination. He watches the behaviour of his mind with the alertness and patience of a scientist handling very sophisticated equipment in the laboratory.

What is strictly called *Kundalini Yoga* (on which several treatises in English are now available) is as systematic as a technical science and has as such attracted considerable attention in India and abroad. There is a technique of meditation also stressed in Patanjali's *Yoga Shashtra*. In this and other forms of *Yoga*, it is very likely that the experience varies slightly from one individual practitioner to another. To that extent, meditation on the Divine is a fine art too. At the same time, it is a systematic discipline with a scientific bias. Success in *Yoga* calls for a vigorous and sustained effort as it does in a scientific pursuit.

An aspirant's spiritual growth certainly derives nourishment from a congenial social ethos and from a culture conducive to his upbringing. However, what he achieves ultimately depends on his individual talent. This also demands that the society permit him to explore Truth in the way he chooses and give him freedom to profess what he considers true in relation to the Divine or the physical world. His opinions may be unorthodox and may not conform to the establishment; freedom is as important in the realm of spirituality as in that of science.

Spirituality essentially aims at man's onward transformation, culminating in realization of the Self. The process involves cleansing of "the doors of perception", enabling the aspirant to see the Divine as the indwelling spirit, inhabiting "a blade of grass", the stars above and "all that we behold". The truly spiritual person provides the best example of a noble human being, moral to the "nth degree" and "divine" to the core. Such a person is the friend of all, a well-wisher of the whole world. The true scientist, likewise, pursues knowledge both for its own sake and for the welfare of

mankind. We cannot blame him outright for how his research findings and theories are exploited by those who wield political power.

A pertinent question that needs to be answered regarding spirituality is : what is the relevance and significance of the *sidhis* or powers that some spiritual Masters are credited with? The *shastras* do mention such things and we cannot dismiss them as mere "superstition". However, what is "esoteric" about them may ultimately be within the reach of science itself (as its boundaries expand), but attaching undue significance to them is perhaps not desirable for the aspirant. They would only distract his attention from what he should prize most—his inward illumination. Of course, the real spiritual miracles that great Masters perform are actually "unseen"—a mere 'look' or a 'touch' works wonders in terms of the spiritual awakening of the seeker who is thus blessed. The accomplished Masters, if and when at all they utilize *sidhis*, do so selectively and discreetly out of compassion for true devotees. They do not do it for winning "applause".

Great *siddhas*, such as Bhagawan Gopi Nath Ji of Kashmir (as we have seen and known him) or the *rishis* of yore, have been spiritual scientists and seers in their own right. An outstanding and classic example of a great spiritual Master and an equally great disciple that comes to my mind is that of Sri Rama Krishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda. When the inquisitive, agnostic like Vivekananda asked the Thakur "Have you seen God?", quick came the latter's reply "Yes, I have seen Him as I see you". The assertive and confident tone of the Master here, the 'spiritual scientist' of note, at once set at rest the honest doubts of the young aspirant, Narendara. He immediately recognized the *Guru* he had been in search of. The encounter between them was a union of two great spiritual personalities. Sri Ram Krishna, the great *Bhakta* of Mother *Kali*, in fact, behaved like a true scientist in experimenting with faiths like Christianity and Islam, and in adopting several *Gurus* including Bhairawi and Totapuri. As

for Vivekananda, we can say that he proved himself to be an epitome of the best that we find in the eastern religions and western thought.

To conclude, the boundaries of science and spirituality do overlap : the scientist's intuition, at times, goads him on and steers his empirical investigations in the right direction. So do the thrilling accounts of the universe, given in science fiction and in works like the scientist James Jeans' '*Mysterious Universe*' sometimes awaken in the inquisitive reader "a sense of wonder". Such accounts may inspire the potential seeker in the 'qualified' reader, whose perception is fine, and awaken the "sleeping" *Kundalini* in him. That is what exactly happened when Sri Rama Krishna was struck by the beauty of a host of swans flying high up in the sky. He was instantly thrown into a trance-like state. There is as much of compatibility between the fine arts (including poetry and music) and spirituality as there is between pure science and the Religion of Man (transcending creeds and dogmas). Swami Vivekananda rightly visualized the future possibility of science coming close to religion and vice versa; extremes, he said, will eventually meet. The spiritual scientist should no longer be a myth but a reality in the future, however distant.

Chapter I

FOLK-TALES OF KASHMIR—A STUDY

BY

HOTTI LAL SAGI

PART IV

LITERATURE

PART IV

LITERATURE

Chapter 1

FOLK TALES OF KASHMIR—A STUDY

MOTI LAL SAQI

Folklore, the sum total of collective experiences and aspirations of peoples, is the expression of combined genius of a culture, inheriting from the past, revitalizing the present and shaping the course of future. Any nation or nationality can neither deny its importance nor can stop its spontaneous emergence and flow. Folklore is a mirror which reflects the wisdom of bygone generations.

It is folklore which preserves, transmits and translates all that which though important in its own right has not attracted the attention of chroniclers and historians for obvious reasons as by and large history has always been the handmaiden of the powerful with slight variations here and there.

Folklore is the precious treasure of the unlettered throng. It is this throng which has kept the wheel of history moving at the cost of sweat and blood. It is the embodiment of a people's innocence nourished by their tears. Thus folklore is the real spokesman of miseries, misfortunes, mirth and merrymakings of the masses. Folklore is not only the expression of life alone but is that life itself which one lives and breathes. There is no hide and seek. It is as a matter of fact is what is what.

Folklore is the fountain head of all that which is being classed under various heads and captions in today's world, as literature, art, law, dance, moral code, family norms, ethical and religious values, social relations so on and so forth. Had there

been no folklore, humanity would have been very poor and wanting.

Folktales constitute an important segment of folklore and have played a decisive role in shaping the mental and social fabric of the society. Folktales have unknowingly propagated the value system and have established social harmony to a large extent and religious norms also. Prior to the emergence of newspapers and electronic media folktales played a pivotal role in entertaining the people. The role of folktales in educating the people needs hardly to be stressed. *Panchtantra* is but a shining example in this connection.

'*Akanandun*' has been a popular folktale in Kashmir from the remote past. It was versified first by the Persian poet, Akmal-ud-Din Badhakshi. This tale is a testimony of human sacrifice in ancient times. The tale has some resemblance with Abraham's sacrifice as referred to in the Old Testament. Such a story is popular in Germany also.

In today's Kashmiri literature '*Akanandun*' has attained the status of a living symbol while mystics discover a spiritual message in this tale. It is because of its popularity that the tale has been versified again and again as many as seven times.

Another similar tale is that of '*Heemaal Nagirai*'. The tale has its roots in the hoary past of Kashmir. It belongs to that period of history when Aryans had established themselves and Nagas had lost their supremacy in Kashmir. This tale is the symbol of fusion of Aryan and Naga cultures, but one thing is very clear that there were forces at work who were bent upon disharmony in the harmonious way of life of Nagas and Aryans. Old Potter Woman happens to be the instrument of such forces. The story at the same time reveals the ages old hatred of co-wives towards each other in this or that way. It is also a testimony of the custom of *Sati* as Heemaal enters the pyre with her husband. Milk in this tale has something special to convey. Milk probably worked as magic for Nagas who snatched their power of changing forms at will. A folktale of this nature is prevailing in the Baltic region. A similar tale is

also included in the folktales of extreme east of our country. In the hoard of Kashmiri folk tales there is quite a good number of tales which provide the reader with food for thought and deserve particular treatment.

'Waga Bhat' is a folktale of this nature. This tale is about a Kashmiri Pandit who was invited to conduct the *Rajsuya Yagya* performed by the Pandavas at the conclusion of *Mahabharata*. The Brahmin worked miracles in *Ashvamedha* and proved his metal to the best of his capacity. The Brahmin as per folk tradition was known as 'Waga Bhata' a village after the name of this Brahmin known as 'Wagahom' is still existing in the Valley.

What the folk-tale reveals is not corroborated by history, but the *Rajatarangini* refers to the fact that the King of Kashmir was to take part in *Mahabharata* as an ally of Kauravas but was slain when he was on his way to Kurukshetra. The reference testifies that the tale is a pointer to a missing link of Kashmiri history. Kashmir was not aloof from the rest of the country and was closely connected with all the activities of the sub-continent. What the folk tale relates has not been seen through the press previously but was often told and retold by elders to inquisitive story-lovers. It is not history alone which speaks of close relations of Kashmir with the rest of the country. Prehistoric and proto-historic remains also subscribe to the truth of this folk tale and bring forth the truth behind this tale.

The story of death and birth of Maharaja Sandhimati of Kashmir recorded in *Rajatarangini* has attained the status of a folk tale in Kumaon and Garhwal hill areas. Such instances speak of relations between the people of Garhwal and Kashmir from olden days. It is interesting to note that in some folk-songs of Gaddies, Kashmir is invoked as a deity and is offered homage.

Some of the folk-tales of mediaeval period of Kashmir have a bearing on history. All Mughal historians have recorded that Jahangir died his natural death at Nooricham. But Kashmiri

folk tale collected by Ghulam Nabi Aatash and included in the 4th vol. of Kashmiri '*Loka Katha*' captioned '*Jori Judai*' (separation of the couple), has something novel to reveal. All the characters in the tale are those who are mentioned in the history excepting Ranga and Rangi who as per the tale belonged to the Rajouri area.

This story for the first time mentions clearly that Jahangir was poisoned by Noor Jahan for killing Ranga the beloved of Rangi for inscribing elephants on rocks which frightened the royal elephants. The tale is recorded for the first time. Previously its oral transmission continued for generations together. Based on the local tradition this folk tale reveals a truth of immense importance which has escaped the attention of chroniclers. As Jahangir breathed his last during travel, it is not impossible that the truth was not unfolded for obvious reasons. Noor Jahan was not happy with the murder of Sher Afgan and she was made to succumb to the desire of the king is very much evident from the tale. Though in a disguised manner, the tale has unknowingly unmasked the reality behind the curtain.

Some of the folk tales have something to convey about certain ethnic groups. "Clever Barber" (*Chalak Navid*) is a folk-tale of this type. A poor but clever barber tames a Yaksha by snatching his cap called '*phus*' in Kashmiri. It is a common belief that whosoever snatches the cap of Yaksha and is able to keep it, the Yaksha becomes his slave and performs any work which is assigned to him. The only way to keep the cap safe is either to keep it under a water pot or under a grinder. On the other hand, if a Yaksha is able to get back his cap he destroys all the belongings of the snatcher of the cap. For some time, the barber exploited the Yaksha and made him to work hard which brought prosperity to the barber. One day when the barber was out of the home, the Yaksha beseeched his mother and got the cap back. The Yaksha was emancipated and he reduced the barber to penury. The barber was again compelled to take up his old job of hair-cutting and attend to his clients.

One day the barber was returning home after his routine work when a *Dev* came his way and tried to devour him. The barber immediately took out his mirror and placed it in front of the *Dev*. The reflection of his own face frightened the *Dev* and gave barber riches in the shape of gold and silver. He happily reached home but his envious neighbour became suspicious and insisted on the barber to reveal the truth threatening that he would otherwise call him a thief. The barber revealed the truth and led his neighbour to the place where the *Devs* were stationed. The barber climbed up a tree and his neighbour remained on the trunk. When the *Devs* came laughing loudly, the barber's neighbour fell down due to fear. The sudden sound of his fall disturbed the *Devs*. They fled the place leaving everything behind. The barber came down, collected everything scattered there. He consoled his neighbour and also gave a morsel to him and turned all the more rich.

In the first part of the tale, we have reference to *Yakshas* known as *Yech* in Kashmiri who are believed to be the old inhabitants of Kashmir. It is said that *Yakshas* were very beautiful and could change their form at will but there was a defect with them that *Yakshinis* were cannibals which brought disrespect and discredit to them. When other tribes entered the Valley the *Yakshas* were compelled to leave the territory and spread in the length and breadth of the sub-continent. Their cannibalism became a threat to their existence. Otherwise, *Yakshas* were among the first people to embrace Buddhism in Kashmir as recorded in the history of Sri Lanka "*The Mahavamsa*". The concept of *Devs* is of Persian origin and has connection with Avesta. The *Dev* of Sanskrit and *Dev* of Avestan have different connotations in Arya Dharma and Zoroastrianism. Derived from one and the same source, *Dev*, in Sanskrit, is a noble soul while in Avestan, *Dev* is an evil spirit—*Asur* of Vedic is the *Aahar* of Avestan. It is simply the pronunciation of the word which separates one word from the other. In Kashmiri folklore both the terms are in vogue under the influence of Sanskrit and Persian.

Both the episodes of this folk-tale confirm the superiority of man over other beings. Yakshas and Devs are very mighty, hard-working and fierce but lack the wit and wisdom which makes them subservient to man.

Some of the folk-tales of Kashmir have their parallels in Tibet, Tamil Nadu and even in Sri Lanka. Similarly, common motifs can be traced in the folk-tales of the world. I suppose such things are not the pointer of a common origin alone. It reveals that people all over the world have passed through some common experiences during the course of history. Some of the folk-tales of Kashmir have their origin in *Panchtantra* and *Jataka* tales; the northern recension of *Panchtantra* is believed to be Kashmirian in origin.

Buddhism was a living faith in Kashmir even in the 15th century A.D. It seems that *Jataka* tales made their way during the glory of Mahayana. The people definitely changed their faith in later centuries but they could not give up their folk legacy as it was in their blood and oral culture was the order of the day.

Some of the folk elements recorded in *Rajatarangni* have penetrated in it from Chinese lore. The legend about the discovery of water by Lalityaditya is attributed to a Chinese general who was on his way to conquer the Central Asian region.

The study of Kashmiri folktales is not only an interesting subject but can prove revealing also. It is the lack of resources and means which has thwarted the endeavour so far.

Chapter 2

KASHMIR SHAIVAISM AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SUFI POETS OF KASHMIR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LAL DED AND NUNDA RISHI

B.N. KALLA

Kashmir Shaivaism, like Mahayan Buddhism, has played a key role in the assimilation of different cultures in Central Asia. While adopting the logic of the Buddhist *Acharyas*; it refuted the fundamental concept of momentariness (शून्यवाद) and looked upon the creation by the Absolute as real and the manifestation of the light of intelligence or universal consciousness. It took the cordial principles of social equality, individual liberty, absence of dogma and rituals from Buddhism. Like Mahatma Buddha himself, the saviour of mankind, the Shaivas, regarded the Absolute *Parmassiva* as the Creator, Preserver and Absorber in his different aspects. He manifests his *Shakti* and withdraws it when His free-will (*Swatantrya*) demands it. The individual is a mini Shiva, who, when he recognizes his true self, becomes one with the universal consciousness. Somananda, the father of *Pratyabhijna* philosophy, hailed from Tibet and naturally influenced the thought and ideology of those who lived in Central Asia.

The emergence of Islam in Central Asia was influenced not only by the ideology of the Buddhists but also of the Shaivas in and outside Kashmir. Their *Mathikas* (centres of

theological discourse) seem to have been easily accessible to those Sufis who were deeply interested in Buddhist thought. As a result of the synthesis between Buddhism and Islam, Sufism adopted a liberal outlook quite in agreement with the tenets of Shaivism. It laid great emphasis on self-recognition, the *ratyabhijana* of Shaivas. Like the latter it denounced idolatory and caste, and advocated individual freedom in attaining realisation. Though the Sufis, like the Vedantists regarded the world as illusory and transitory, sufism came closer to the Shaiva philosophy with respect to its fundamental principle of the individual's free-will and his potential to recognize his true self.

Shaivism was the most ancient faith of Indian people. We find its roots in the Indus Valley civilization. Though basically pre-Aryan and pre-Vedic in origin, it developed by stages in the Vedic religion, and became one of the most vital elements of Hinduism in the age of the Epics and *Puranas*.

From the times of yore, the Brahmins of Kashmir had been performing Vedic rituals which are predominantly Vaishnavite in character. The worship of Shiva and Shakti also had become very popular in this land right from the prehistoric times. There are many prehistoric Shiva shrines in Kashmir.

The Shaivism for which Kashmir is famous is the monistic Shaiva philosophy of the *Tryambaka* school and this philosophy is the most valuable contribution of Kashmir to Indian culture. This philosophy basically originated in the trans-Himalayan areas near Kailasa in about the 4th century. Traymbakaditya, disciple of sage Durvasa, was the first teacher of this school. Sangmaditya, the sixteenth desendent in the line of Tryambaka, settled in Kashmir in the eighth century. Different Shaiva scriptures as *Malinivijaya Tantra*, *Swacchanda*, *Netra*, *Mrigendra*, etc., were afterwards revealed to different teachers of this school in about one century. Somananda, the fourth descendant of Sangmaditya churned the ocean of scriptures and extracted from it the nectar of the principles of the monistic Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir in the 9th century. He expressed those principles in a logical manner in his work

'*Shivadrsti*', which is the first philosophical treatise on the subject. Utpaladeva, the chief disciple of Somananda, developed this philosophy in his *Ishvarapratibhijna* and in some works like *Sambandha Sidhi*, *Isvar Siddhi*, etc. The principles of this philosophy were later explained clearly and interpreted by Abhinavagupta, the grand disciple of Utpaladeva, in the later part of the tenth century and the beginning of the 11th century.

Shivasutras were revealed to Vasugupta, a teacher in the school of *Tryambaka*, in the 8th century. Kallata, a disciple of Vasugupta, composed *Spandakarika*, in which he explained the principles contained in *Shivasutras*.

In view of the facts given above the Shaiva philosophical movement which started in 8th century reached its zenith in the 12th century. Really, this was a golden age in the field of philosophy because it contributed a new thought to the Indian philosophy. The Shaiva monism of Kashmir has a pragmatic approach towards the problems of philosophy. It is not idealistic like the *Advaita Vedanta* and Buddhism. The universe, according to it, is neither like a mirage nor like the child of a barren woman. It is a reality for all practical purposes. It exists in the absolute reality in the form of pure limitless and all-containing consciousness. That consciousness, is called *Parama Shiva*. The universe is nothing but an objective manifestation of His divine powers. He is a reality and His powers are His essence. So His powers are also a reality and so are the manifestations of those powers a reality. He represents an ever pure and limitless consciousness, which is full upto the brim with godly powers and does not undergo any change even when the activities of creation etc., are going on. This is His static aspect in which He is called Shiva. The aspects of the manifestations of His godhead is called His Shakti. Both are two aspects of one and the same absolute all-powerful and independent reality. As the rays of the moon are not different from the moon, Shakti or the power of Shiva is not different from the powerholder (Shaktiman). Thus Shiva, the male principal in its quiescent state, is whole and absolute, but in its manifested state, it becomes Shakti, which is part

and parcel of its nature. The whole, though a part as Shakti is separated from it, still remains complete. Its completeness never ceases. The one becomes many in its active state, but at the same time it holds its oneness and perfection. This idea is explained in this verse:

‘शक्त्योऽस्ति जगत्सर्वं शक्तिमांस्तु महेश्वरः

According to the Vedanta philosophy, the manifestation of the universe is untrue, and has been denied in the long run, but in Kashmir Shaiva philosophy the manifestation is based on Shakti. Nobody can deny this fact. The apparent world to the Shaiva philosophy is a thing of enjoyment, while in the Vedanta system it is false and full of illusion. Shaiva *advaita* explains that the universe is already existing in Shiva. Thus the world is the expansion of Shakti, which is not different from Shiva.

Kashmir Shaivism accepts no restrictions based on caste, creed, colour and sex. Every person can have access to it both theoretically and practically. In practice it does not advocate monkhood but advises to live the life of a house holder and to practise side by side the *Shaiva Yoga* for the sake of self-realization. It does not advocate *sanyasa*. It prohibits all practices leading to the suppression of one's emotions and instincts and advocates the path of sublimation. It does not ignore the wordly and heavenly aims of life consisting of objective enjoyments. It rather advocates a path aimed at both *Bhukti* (enjoyment) and *Mukti* (liberation) both of which can be pursued side by side. Too much of discipline regarding food, etc., has not been considered to be absolutely essential.

As mentioned above, Kashmir Shaivism was in vogue here for about five centuries from the 8th century to the 12th century. Kashmiri poetry did not remain untouched by its influence. The First specimen of Kashmiri poetry is Shitikantha's '*Mahanaya Prakasha*' of 13th century which is the first book on Shaivism in the Kashmiri language. This influence has continued up to this time.

The 14th century witnessed a political upheaval in Kashmir when Kota Rani, the last Hindu ruler of Kashmir, was murdered by Shahmir who proclaimed himself the Sultan of Kashmir in 1339 AD. Thus Hindu rule was uprooted from the soil of Kashmir for about 500 years. It was during this period that Islam spread in Kashmir. Oppression, destruction, demolition of temples and massacre of Hindus was the policy of the fanatic Sultans of Kashmir. Successive Sultans of Kashmir adopted the policy of Sikandar Butshikan (iconoclast) except for Zain-ul-Abdin Budshah (1423-1474 AD.) The only ray of hope was the message of the Sufis to the suppressed masses of that time.

Sufiism was introduced here by the Sayyids and their followers who came from Persia and Central Asia to settle down in Kashmir. The spread of Sufiism side by side with Shaivism (*pratyabhijna* philosophy) gave rise to humanitarian thinking in the Valley. This composite Shaiva-cum-Sufi philosophy consciously or unconsciously has been influencing the people of Kashmir till date.

We cannot ignore the remarkable contribution of Lalleshwari or Lall Ded (b. 1335 AD) in the field of Kashmiri poetry. She was the first poetess of Kashmiri who gave expression to Shaivite philosophical thoughts in a charming manner. She was followed in this tradition by many mystic poets, both Hindus and Muslims. She preached this philosophy in the language of the masses (Kashmiri) and not in Sanskrit. She denounced rituals, narrow-mindedness, fanaticism and the debasing distinction of caste. Moreover, she gave the message of universal brotherhood, peace and love based on the *Upanishads*.

The following verses can be quoted from her *Vakhs*: (sayings):

शव छुइ थलि थलि रोजान
मो ज्ञान ब्योभ ह्योद तें मुसलमान।
त्रुखय छुख पान प्रजनाव
स्वय छय साहिबस सकृत्य जअनीज्ञान॥

(Shiva is all-pervading (present in each particle). Never differentiate between a Hindu and a Musalman. If you are intelligent, know thy own self; therein lies your acquaintance with God.)

लल्लु बँ चायस स्वमन बागँ बरस
बुछुम शिवस शख्त त मीलित् वाह ।
तति लय कअरम अमृत सरस
जिंदय मरस म्य करि क्याह ॥

(I, Lalla, willingly entered through the garden-gate. There, I joyfully found Shiva united with Shakti; there and then I got absorbed in this, drinking at the lake of nectar. Immune to harm am I; dead am I to the world, though still alive).

Lalla entered *Samadhi*. In that state, what did she see? Shiva the transcendental being, united with His power of manifestation, Shakti. Duality, as well as any residual doubts about it, was totally wiped out. The nectar of bliss was at her disposal, not in drops but in the form of a lake. She attained (*Parmananda*) the state of the highest bliss.

गगन चँय भूतल चँय
छुख द्यन पवन तँ राथ ।
अर्थ चन्दुन पोश पोत्र चँय
चँय छुख सोरुय लग्य जि क्याह ॥

(You are the sky, you are the earth,
You are the day, the atmosphere and the night,
You are the grains, the sandal (wood), flowers and water,
When you are everything, what may be offered to you
in worship).

Everything in the universe is the result of divine manifestation, and *Parma Siva* is all that exists.

His nature has primarily a two-fold aspect—an immanent aspect in which He pervades the universe, and a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. Sheikh Nur-ud Din, popularly known as Nunda Rishi, was one

of the Sufi poets of Kashmir who belonged to 14th century. He was the contemporary of Lalla. He is considered to be the founder of the Rishi cult in the Valley. He introduced a new style in composing poetry in Kashmiri language. His *Shrukhs* shlokas, are very famous and popular among the people. Nunda Rishi's philosophy is very close to *Pratyabijna* philosophy, according to which *Parmashiva* can be realized in one's own self. This is clear from what Nunda Rishi says in the following verses or *Shrukha*:

सु म्य निशे बँ तस निशे म्य तस निशे करार आव ।
नाहक छौंडुम म्य परदीशे मनने दीशे म्य यार आव ॥

(He is in me, I am in Him. I experienced bliss in His company. I looked for Him here and there, but I found Him in my own self).

Nunda Rishi completely identifies himself with the Absolute Reality. He merges with Him, and obtains bliss. This is again clear from what he says in another *shrukha*:-

युसुय तति छुय सुय छुम यते सुय छुय प्रथ शायि रटिथ मकाम ।
सुय छुय प्यादेँ सुय छुय रथे सुय छुय सोरुय गुपिथपान ॥

(He is here, He is there, He pervades everywhere. He is both in the pedestrian and driver of a chariot. He is concealed, He is transcendental in the form of pure consciousness. He is the light of awareness in the form of non-transcendence).

At another place Nunda Rishi refers to his search of the divine:

सअरी त्रअविथ रउदुख म्य चँय म्य चअय छांडान लूसुम दोह ।
पानस मंज यलि रदुख म्य चँय म्य च्य तै पानस दितुम छोह ॥

(I forsook everything and took shelter in you. I spent my days in search of you. When I got hold of you in my body I merged myself with you).

In that state there is no duality at all. Nunda Rishi thus realized Absolute Reality in his own self.

At another place, Nunda Rishi refers to his search in quest of the Divine.

सअरी त्रअविथ रोदुख म्य चऊय
म्य चऊय छांझान लूसुम दोह।
जानस मंज यअलि रउदुखं म्य चैय
म्य च्य तँ पानस दितुम छोह॥

(I forsook everything and took shelter in you, I spent my days in search of you. When I merged you in my body I then searched You and myself.) At that state too there exists no duality at all. Nunda Rishi thus realized Absolute Reality in his ownself.

बग ! कअलास खअरिथ नितम
त्युथ म्य वर दितम दीवो॥

(Oh God! bless me with the boon of ascending Kailash).

This indicates the strong urge of Nunda Rishi to merge himself with the Absolute Reality so that he could reach the very seat of the Supreme.

In the verses cited above the impact of Shaiva philosophy and its doctrines is apparent in the outpourings of the Sufi poets.

The influence of Shaiva philosophy cannot be ruled out among the other Sufi poets of Kashmir such as Shamas Faqir, Swachha Kraal, Nyama Sahib and Ahad Zargar.

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Chapter 3

HUMANIST POETS OF 14TH CENTURY KASHMIR

GAURI BAZAZ MALIK

YOGINI LALLESHWARI

There are various ways of looking at history, one or them being deterministic—a historical optimism or notion that the course of events would lead to something good. Like people everywhere, Kashmiris also hoped that everything would be better with time but the chronicles present a different picture. Upto Mohammed Ghaznavi's multiple invasions on India (1020-30 AD), and an aborted one on Kashmir in 1023, page after page of Kalhana's "*Rajtarangini*" records bestiality and savagery by those who ruled. This is personified by King Harsha (1089-1101 AD) who "appointed Udayaraja prefect for seizing and melting divine images to mint coins"; and King Rajadeva (1213-1236) who according to Jonaraja made it a point to insult Bhattas and made them cry "I am not a Bhatta". Despotism, selfishness and misrule were prevalent when Sahadeva (1300-20) and Udyandeva (1323-36) came to the throne. At the end of the nineteenth century Lawrence wrote, "Perhaps nowhere else in the world has nature been so blissful and benevolent to people as Kashmir. Neither the natural beauty nor the delicious climate of the valley has been exaggerated in the books which I have read; however, fortunate though in having a beautiful environ, people were unlucky in being frequently ruled by despots and cruel rulers".

Queen Kotadevi, although capable, courageous and benevolent, was alas, the last Hindu regent of Kashmir (1336-39). Shahmir ascended the throne as Sultan Shamasuddin (1339) and laid the foundation of the "Shahmiri" dynasty which ruled Kashmir for the next 222 years. Lalleshwari or Lalla Arifa or Lal Ded was born sometime during this transition from Hindu to Muslim rule. The change did not make the people feel as a subjugated or a conquered race as those who became their rulers had once been their saviours through the difficult times. That the Muslim-Hindu marriage of Rinchen (later Sultan Sadar-ud Din) and Kotadevi aroused no communal passions was a cardinal evidence of the changing times. Modern chroniclers, Bamzai¹ and Bazaz² share these views. One cannot but realize that Kashmir in a real sense did not enjoy even a single century of continued peace.

The reign of the illustrious rulers like Meghavahana, Lalitaditya, Avantivarman, Shahabuddin and Zainulabdin who made this country prosperous and happy, appear as oases in an ocean of tyranny and maladministration which people had to suffer all through the ages. It was through the effort of the people that excellent centers of scholarship, learning, arts and philosophy besides a flourishing international trade could be established in Kashmir. As an advanced post of philosophies and culture of Kashmir, Central Asia acquired a special status—political, social and cultural in the structure of the Kanishkan empire. This helped Central Asia to evolve as a great seat of Indo-Buddhist scholarship and learning (V-X cen. AD). The inspired guidance was provided by Kashmiri Buddhist scholars and apostles who also took it beyond the confines of Central Asia into China and Mongolia. This saga forms a fascinating subject of study by itself. The *Nilanagmata* an indigenous belief and way of life was significantly influenced by Brahminism before Buddhism entered Kashmir with the Ashokan rule (III cen. BC). Buddhism propagated equality and the concept of a casteless society. *Saravastidin Mahayana* was put on a firm foundation by the great Buddhist

savant Nagarjuna who established a *Chaitya* and a *Vihara* at Shadarhadvan (modern Harvan) in Kashmir (I-II cen AD). "*Boddhisatva* Nagarjuna was virtually the supreme ruler of the land, and it was an era of peace and prosperity", says Kalhana. The greatest of the Kushan rulers made Srinagar as one of his capitals. He was greatly influenced by Nagarjuna and so he accepted Buddhism and propogated it throughout his empire as Ashoka had done earlier. He organised the Third World Assembly of the *Sangha* near modern day Shalimar, under the chairmanship of Nagarjuna.

"*Shaivism*" or "*Trika Shastra*", a philosophy believed to have it's roots in pre-Vedic Kashmir school of thought, was resurrected by Vasugupta and his disciples Kalatta Bhatta, Somadeva and Utpaldeva sometime between V-VI century. As the name implies *Trika*, a liberal and liberating philosophy pertains to three vital matters concerning man; knowledge, freedom and cosmic harmony. The greatest exponent and commentator of *Trika* was Abhinavgupta (950-1020 AD) who wrote extensive critiques on *Trika* and along with thousands of his disciples put it on a firm foundation. His *Tantraloka* is considered to be the true encyclopedia of *Trika Shastra*. According to it the philosophy is meant to be practiced without any distinction of caste or creed. *Tantraloka* insists that none be deprived of knowledge of freedom to seek the truth of realization of the ultimate reality. It clearly forbids suppression of any debate, however strongly it maybe in opposition to the beliefs of *Trika* itself. However, what makes this philosophy unique is that it recognizes *woman as an individual* in her own right and says "a woman devoted to the principal of *Trika* will achieve *Siddhi* in twelve days, as will take a man twelve months". Kshemendra in his "*Swachanda Tantra*" directs "no genuine follower of *Trika* should have any quarrel with any other system of thought and worship".

As various spiritual missions were following the Silk Route, Sasanian, Zoroastrian and Confucian influences were flowing to and fro. Buddhism established itself in Asia, China

and Mongolia. Impact of another Oriental faith, Islam, was felt in India within a century of the Prophet Mohammed's migration from Mecca to Madina (622 AD). Within a century of this, a clash occurred between Mohammad-bin Qasim and the Brahmin king Dahir of Sindh (722 AD) reviving the earlier enriching contact with Bactrian Greek, Shaka, Parthians and Kushana culture. In its wake, the spread of Islam brought invasions of nomad Huns, Turks and Tartars from Mongolia and the North Steppes belonging to the dynasties of Chingiz Khan and Timur Khan, conquerors of the same class as Alexander the Great. Zulkadar Khan, a descendent of the Tartar Chingiz Khan invaded Kashmir in 1319 and Dulcha a decade later wreaking havoc and devastation; and leaving in their wake a humiliated nation.

Many *Ulemas*, *Mirs*, *Sayeds* and *Sufis* of Iraq, Iran and Khurasan who had studied in the universities of Bokhara and Samarkand, fleeing from the persecution of Timur took asylum in Kashmir. They brought the Sufi way of life, and their teachings became very popular among the people who found much similarity between *Trika* and *Sufism*. The term Sufism was naturalized to Reoshism and it was Lal Ded who brought monotheistic *Trika* and *Reoshism* closer.

The details involving the birth and *Samadhi* of Lal Ded still remain enigmatic. However, all accounts agree that she was born sometime between 1320 (Kaul) and 1335 AD (Bazaz) in a Shaiva family in Sempur or Pandrethan village, about 5 km from Srinagar. Her death, however can only be conjectured. Some Muslims even identify a grave in Jama Masjid campus (Vejebrore), Bijbihara (Vijayavihara) as her last resting place. But, perhaps guided by one of her sayings (*Vakhs*) viz. "Then lo! The Chitta itself is gone, and there is nothing left behind; the cosmos merges with cosmos, only pure consciousness remains" Hindus believe that a flame (Soul) arose from her body and became one with *Prakriti* (Nature). No mortal memorial stands in the memory of this great poet-philosopher and social reformer who achieved fame and became a legend

in her own life time. Shurhayaar, the last upstream bathing ghat on the right bank of the Vitasta (Jhelum) near her village is associated with Lalla. It was here that she would come for *Dikhsha* from her *Guru*, Siddhamol (Revered Siddha) an eminent Sanskrit scholar and an authority on *Trika* philosophy. Siddhabal and Ganeshbal, a few miles short of Pahalgam on the left bank of the Sindhu, where pilgrims take the holy dip and perform Puja before commencing their *Padyatra* to Shri Amarnath are also associated with *Shaiva Maths* of her times. These places are also venerated as 'the *Chhari Mubarak*', the celebrated mace of Lord Shiva, which leads the Amarnath *Yatra*, stops here. The tolerant tradition of *Trika* is also linked with the Maliks who are the hereditary guides of the holy cave and the first discoverer of the Ice *Lingam*. Maliks continue to worship and share the offerings with the Brahmin priests (*Pandas*) of Martandswami (Mattan) and the Sadhus of Dashmi Akhara, notwithstanding their conversion to Reoshism (Sufism) centuries ago. What continues to stand out is the undying popular affection and reference for this revolutionary Shaivite who together with Nund Reosh (Sheekh Noor-ud-Din)³ laid the *foundation of tolerant humanism*, becoming the instrument of spiritual humanism in Kashmir.

Chroniclers of the time, Jonaraja (1400-59 AD), Shrivara (1459-1486 AD), Pragayabhatta (1486-1513 AD) and Shuka (1513-1586 AD)⁴ have not given Lal Ded or *Trika* Shaivism or any of the renowned Siddha scholars, who preached Shaiva philosophy, their due importance. This may be because its monotheistic philosophy was revolutionary in approach and against the caste system. The elitist Sanskrit scholars of the time⁵ were disinclined to give Lal Ded a place in their records, because firstly she had united the downcast with the mainstream of humanity by her recitations of Kashmiri *Vakh*. The *Vakhs* were four-line sayings often of unfathomable content and meaning but spoken in the language of the masses, thus making it possible for them to comprehend their ethos and depth. Secondly as a non-conformist she had stepped out of

the conventional role of a traditional Brahmin wife and daughter-in-law, in a timeless social order; to roam the jungles, dressed in air, spreading her message of love, harmony, tolerance and brotherhood. According to Prof. Jayalal Kaul, "She was against the formalities of ceremonial piety, was vehemently critical of orthodoxy, dogma and ritual, its hypocrisy and caste exclusiveness." She spoke of the Shaiva doctrine and its discipline, to all, disregarding the strict injunction in behalf of *Adhikarbeda*, and that using the vulgar tongue of the unlettered masses"⁶.

The credit of keeping Lal Ded's memory alive goes to Nund Reosh, her spiritual heir and his disciples—Bibis and Babas of Reoshism. The momentous occasion of Nund Reosh's first feed by Lal Ded has been immortalized in eloquent verses, both by him and his followers. He says :

Kashmiri: "*Tas Padamporichi Laley,*
Yami Amrit Chav Galey Galey".

Translation: "To that Lal-Ded of Padampora,
Who took the Divine nectar,
She the great yogini lulled saints in her lap
Bestow me, My Lord, with same grace".

"Oh Thee, the full moon of the universe,
Immediately after your birth, Lalla Arifa,
Did adorn, in her lap, a cradle for you,
And made you drink the nectar in her lap,
Bravo, my Lord, Oh, generous Noor-ud-Din".

(Bibi Sangha)

The earliest record of Lalla Arifa appears in the ornate Persian manuscript "*Asrar-ul-abrar*" (1654) by Baba Dawud Mishkati, written more than three centuries after her death. The author eulogizes, "the saintly lady Lalla Arifa was accepted as the mystic of the highest order, the second Rabia Adeviya of Bassra (d 810)". Rabia, a gifted mystic of the Sufi order, is credited with the introduction of the notion of "love which

seeks no reward", a concept which forms the backbone of the *Bhakti* movement throughout India. According to Mishkati this notion is emphasized in "*Lalla Vakhs*".

A "*Lalla Vak*" purporting to her father, shows Lalla as a vivacious child with keen intellect, penetrating observation, and an enquiring mind. When a friend of her father asks her "Where is your father?" she skilfully replies :

Kashmir: *Seddha chum zaph karan tai zaph karan;
Manz marghe ken gureyan typh karan tai
tuph karan."*

Translation: Seddha is going on and on with meditation; actually his mind is with riding horses grazing in the meadows".

Even though still a child, Lalla's familiarity with the rules of *Trika* meditation, the basis of which are a disciplined mind and deep concentration, is clearly evident. She had been instructed in *Trika* and Sanskrit by her father and Seddha Mol, her *Guru*. She thus grew up in a liberated environment which evolved her into a fearless and outspoken person. Such qualities are a reflection of a milieu of freedom—the basic human value, which even today as we approach the 21st century is a wonder to most. For a child grown in such an atmosphere, any kind of orthodoxy, immutable social mores and monotony of domestic chores in the absence of intellectual stimulation could be a suffocating experience. This is exactly what happened when the 12 year old girl was married to Nika Bhat of a Brahmin family of Pampur (Padampura), a few miles upstream of her parental home. As a disciplined individual she complied with the orthodox views while clandestinely continuing her lessons in *Trika* with Seddha Mol after marriage. In her new home she accepted the traditions and mundaneness till a casual taunt from a friend, also a regular visitor to Vitasta ghat to fetch water, evoked from Lalla's stifled soul :

Kashmiri: "*Hond maran ya kath,
Lalli nil vath tsali na zanh*".

Translation: "It may be a sacrifice of a lamb or a sheep,

Lalla cannot escape being served a blue stone".

(Under the pile of rice to make it look bigger).

This rejoinder was only the tip of an iceberg of an inhumane story of malfeasance and malediction, isolation and loss of intellectual freedom, that Lalla encountered and from which she saw no release. Instead of dying everyday, she had the tremendous courage of conviction to not only walk out on her in-laws and abandon her parental fold, but also to free herself from the world to become a wanderer, a seeker of Truth. She sought freedom, physical and intellectual, from the malafide social restrains, superstition, ignorance, false rituals and worst of all an intellectual violence and bankruptcy.

It would have been enlightening to know the thoughts and emotions of Lalla at that juncture of total emancipation. However, even if one had known her feelings, it would not have changed in the author or reader an absolute admiration for her immense courage and intellectual honesty. One does not feel sorry for her, but for a social structure which is capable of victimizing an individual, a free thinker, a philanthrop who was dauntless enough to challenge its so called respectability and debunk it. Scandalized, the society declared her insane and called her "*Lalla mats*"; which had she been an ordinary mortal, she may well have become, under the social structure and gender restrains that were prevalent then and even now. But she had strength and determination, for her worries were of a different kind. Being honest to herself she records for posterity:

Kashmiri: *"Aami pana sadras naavi chhas lamaan,
Kati bozi dai myon maeti diyi taar
Aamyen takyen ponyye zan shamaan,
Zuv chhum bramaan gara gatsha haa"*

Translation: "With unspun thread I tow my boat across
the ocean,
Where and when will my deity hear me also
and guide me across;

My heart is almost deceived into temptation
to return home,
Like water collecting in the saucers of
unbaked clay"

She was obviously still uncertain, scared that temptations
may weaken her resolve and lead to failure. Nikka Bhat
continued to beseech her to return home. He enters into a
debate with her and her Guru, Seddha Mol on the greatest
happiness of life:-

Kashmiri: *"Tsandras hyu na prakash kanh,
Gangi hyu na tirath kanh;
Bhandav hyu na tirath kanh,
Rani hyu na sukh kanh"*.

Translation: "There is no light like moon light,
No holier place than Ganga;
No friend better than blood relation,
No better giver of joy than the wife".

Seddha Mol argues that,

Kashmiri: *"Achhan hyu no prakash kanh,
Kothyav hyu na tirath kanh;
Chandas hyu na bandhav kanh,
Aaris zuwas hyu na bodh kanh"*.

Translation: "There is no light like eye sight,
No pilgrimage better than one's legs;
No friend better than one's pocket,
No joy better than good health".

While Lalla's viewpoint is that,

Kashmiri: *"Mayas hyu na prakash kanh,
Payas hyu na tirath kanh;
Dayas hyu na bandhav kanh;
Bhayas hyu na sukh kanh"*.

Translation: "There is no light like spirituality,
No holy place like knowledge of the
unknown;
No friend better than God,
No happiness like the fear of the evil."

In this debate Lalla surpasses even her Guru and conveys a vivid and beautiful description of her ideal and her perfect understanding of it. Lalla is aware of having taken the harder path. She is aware that she has not only challenged the socio-religious structure, but also that she is seeking the alternatives that would give peace to others too. It was a search to know the unknown, like that of any contemporary logician, rationalist or even a scientist. Into her pithy verses she breathes the pain of her struggle in her voyage into the unknown:

Translation: "Hoping to bloom like a cotton flower,
I Lalla, set forth in the colourful world;
But soon the cleaner and the carder came,
And gave me hard knocks and blows.
Spun into a gossamer yarn by a woman
spinner;
I was helplessly hung upon a loom on her
wheel,
And given more knocks from the weavers
broom.
Now turned into cloth, I was dashed and
dashed
By the washerman on the washing stone,
He threw me with the fuller's earth and
soap.
The tailor now worked scissors on me,
And cut me with care, piece by piece;
Thus was it that I, Lalla at last,
Entered the high state of Shiva".

Aptly Lalla describes how she weeded wisdom and knowledge from what she read and heard. She personifies herself as one who practices what one preaches. She identifies her ideal Shiva, as the "Absolute Truth" which can be reached through knowledge alone.

Kashmiri: "*Parun polum, aporuy polum*".

Translation: "I nurtured what I read and weaned what I
was not taught, from this Jungle abode I

brought the Lion down, as jackal, to the world.

I practiced what I preached and secured the God”.

For her all religions were truly the same. For her God was one. Through her monotheistic philosophy she made an attempt to unite humanity, which in a sense is the first step towards creating conditions for achieving tolerance amongst the people and brotherhood to humanity. As a humanist she says:

Kashmiri: “*Shiva va Keshva va Gyana*”.

Translation: “Shiva or Keshava or Buddha or the intellect or may be the lotus born Brahma,
Whatever name He may bear;
Let him remove the sickness from the world,
Be it He or He or He”.

She had munificence of spirit and did not believe in compartmentalizing humanity into different castes or creeds or genders. Even untouchables for her belonged to the one brotherhood, one humankind.

“I renounced fraud, untruth, deceit,

I taught my mind to see the one in all my fellowmen;
How could I then discriminate between man and man,
And not accept the food offered by a brother’s hand.”

She gives a superior status to man’s consciousness, logic and rationality which are within him. Therefore, she wonders as to why one should search for him anywhere else when one can begin with oneself, by looking within and elevating the soul to that goodness that is inherent in humanity.

Kashmiri: “*Goran vonanam kunui watchun.*”

Translation: “The Guru gave me but one percept,
From without withdraw your gaze within;
And fix it on the innermost self,
Take to heart this one percept.”

The following *Vakh* of Lalla’s is significant in that it conveys the essence of *humanism* that Lalla believed in and practiced. The truthful, mundane life lived here itself is the

achievement of the sought, the true reality. There is no duality between man and god. She conveys in this poignant verse that the *occult* and the unknown world beyond that one seeks, is not the reality :

Kashmiri: "Yi yi korum, sui archum."

Translation: "What ever I did, became my offering as worship,

What ever words I uttered became my prayer;

Whatever experienced became my Sadhna,

Thus Shiva's Tantra illuminated my path."

Like the other great thinkers Buddha, Christ, Gandhi that history has seen among many others, Lalla too was worried about the dispossessed, poor, sick and infirm. She too concluded that these evils could be ameliorated by compassion, concern and help. These values are realized only when greed and avarice are gone. Says Lalla :

Kashmiri: "Gatulah akh vuchum bwachi suty maraan."

Translation: "I saw a wise person die of hunger,

just like a leaf dropping in winter winds;

I saw a fool beat his cook,

Since then I Lalla am anxiously waiting for the day,

When the lure of the material will fall away."

During her life time she was influenced by *Sufism* which shared many ideologies with *Buddhism* and *Trika*. In fact, she was the one who later, alongwith Nund Reosh, furthered the merger of these three tributaries to evolve into a tolerant ocean of brotherhood; the backbone of a culture which is recognized through a *Lallavakh* thus :

Kashmiri: "Shiv chu thali thali rozaan."

Translation: "Shiv is always confronting us, therefore,

Do not discriminate between Mussalman and Hindu;

In your logical thinking try to recognize

yourself in both; That will be true communication with Him."

By now it was not a Shaiva or a Brahman or a Sufi or a Mussalman who was speaking through Lalla. It was the representative of humanity. The great compassionate soul proclaims :

Kashmiri: "*Samsaras ayas tapas, boddha prahsha lobum sahas*".

Translation: "Into this world I came as a mendicant. Boddha (intellect) illuminated my path to recognize myself easily. Self is the maker of Self and a guide to one's own destiny. Need is not for seeking Unseen power, the power is within oneself. Therefore, have faith in yourself, as that is the only path that leads to Freedom."

This was the "Absolute Truth" that Lalla was in search of, and found through the pursuit of empirical knowledge, both theoretical and experienced. This for her was the "Universal Truth". The truth which could liberate humanity from the worldly bondages and ritualistic practices. Lalla interprets it in a simple though subtle way for the masses in their own language through her *Vakhs* that could be understood by even the unlettered. Such philosophy till then, was written in Sanskrit, limited to the elite, which was now available in a simple metaphor to the underprivileged, downtrodden who grabbed it and preserved it for posterity as their own oral tradition. For them it was a great spiritual experience, uplifting and rejuvenating. She gradually introduced the new words from Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian into her vocabulary which slowly got absorbed in the Kashmiri language, and conveyed the very ethos of her thoughts. The ethos of Lal Ded's *Vakhs* were soul searching and intellectually stimulating. That is why the Sultans heard them and listened to them and for the first time Kashmiri achieved the status of court language. Prof. Jayalal Kaul says: "It is not the obtuse, it is the sincerity of faith, the intensity

of the experience of self realization and authenticity of Lalla's poetic expression revealed by an intense energy of idiom and homely yet terse imagery, unsurpassed till the present that has given her verse (Vaks) a lasting eminence in the peoples' memory and literature of Kashmir." Even today the wisdom of her thoughts can be appreciated and admired.

Thus Lalla outshines as the saviour of a composite culture, as casteless as it could be; and a language which could have been wholly swept by the elitist Sanskrit and later the tide of other influences like Persian, Afghan, Sikh or Dogri.

"Her poetry", says Sir George Grierson "claims the attention of philologists as the oldest known specimen of Kashmiri language". It was for the first time perhaps during historical times anywhere, that mystic "Truth" and it's disciplines relevant to their realization were made available to the unlettered masses in a language that they knew, after Buddha had done it through *Pali* about 2000 years earlier.

Lalla was neither a spineless intellectual nor an academic mandarin or a trafficker of opium. To her, knowledge was the ultimate guide to the faculties of considering, percieving, reflecting, investigating and the ultimate conscious, process of rationalisation. Revolutionary philosophers of her kind are not made by fate, sentiment, dogma or rituals, but by individuals who seek their own path, destiny and thus the destiny of their society. These are the solitary beings of genius; what drives them is their conviction that every person is the master of his salvation. Lalla believed that the roots of social evils—fatalism, superstition and fear of the unknown prevent anyone from unravelling the unknown; that is why she stressed freeing ones mind from ignorance, blind faith, ritualism, dogmatism and caste stratification. It cannot be ignored that Lal Ded's thoughts could have suffered from the limitations of the era of reactionary Brahminism in which she was born and lived but she was guided by the knowledge she sought and passed through intellectual fermentation. The credit goes to Lalla's parents who provided her with basic human values and an

ambivalent atmosphere to let make her own choice. By birth she was the inheritor of class dominance as scholarship and learning; that inspite of this, the social bias could let her get away with the courage of her conviction and self confidence to transcend almost all these limitations is because dissentions like that of Lalla have not been unknown to the ancient cultural traditions of India. Not knowing much about Lalla, one cannot comment which of these traditions beyond *Trika* could have influenced and guided her. Her intellectual activities are dominated by cerebral and rational rather than emotional spiritualism. Even then these became the daily incantations in the language of the common people. She conveys her philosophical thoughts with great command on the language and expression with intense passion as well as subtlety. The masterly adequacy of her knowledge, which she succeeds to put across even to the illiterate, retains its freshness till today and lives with its full vitality. Herself, she stands as a symbol of gender equality. She was not the one to await till *Armageddom*, therefore she could usher in a period of renaissance. She was indeed a visionary, much ahead of her times.

REOSH NOOR-UD-DIN

The transition from Hindu to Islamic rule in Kashmir was a gradual oscillating process from King Sahadeva (1301-20) through Buddhistic Prince Rinchen (later Sadar-ud Din, 1320-23), to King Udyanadeva (1324-36) and then to Shahmir (Shamas-ud Din 1339-42). It was interrupted by invasions of Zulkadar Khan or Dulcha (1319) and Achla or Urwan (1329) who were descendants of Changez Khan who is considered as one of the three greatest conquerors of the old world. The valiant and wise queen Kotadevi, was the virtual ruler during those turbulent decades. Guided by her father and Prime Minister, Ramachandra, she provided not only a sense of continuity to the changing regime but also a sense of security

and belonging to the masses which brought a semblance of peace and normalcy to the land. It encouraged *Ulemas*, *Mir Sayeds* and *Sufis* of Turkmania and other Central Asian states fleeing persecution from the orthodox Timurid regime to seek asylum in Kashmir. They brought with them a tolerant vision of Islam, the Persian language and culture which intermingled with the indigenous Kashmiri beliefs and culture.

Islam had been known in Kashmir for some centuries and its ideology had much in common with that of *Trika*. The Hindu rulers of Kashmir had allowed acceptance of Muslims as courtiers and soldiers, and had in turn received yeoman service. After being rejected by the Brahminic fold the Buddhist King Rinchen invited Sayed Abdul Rehman Sharaf-ud Din (Bulbul Shah), who alongwith other *Ulemas* had arrived in Kashmir in 1301, to convert him to Islam. Prior to this, many other settlers, who mostly espoused Sufism had established colonies in the hilly areas of Kashmir. They were non-interfering and peace loving people. After Sultan Shamas-ud Din's 3 year rule, his son continued with the peace policies laid by him. His grandson, Sultan Shihab-ud Din (1354-73) expanded the territories incorporating Tibet, Kishtwar, Jammu, Afghanistan and the adjacent Indian territory forcing Sultan Feroz Tughlaq to enter into a treaty with Kashmir. Shihab-ud-Din earned the title of "Second Lalitaditya" of Kashmir. It was during the regime of these Sultans that a unique practice of reciting Lal Ded's *Vakhs* accompanied by *Sufiana* music in the court and before the morning prayer in the mosque was initiated, a feature of Kashmiri Islam that is still extant. Sanskrit continued to be the court language of the early Sultanate alongwith Kashmiri and was replaced completely by Persian only during the Mughal rule. Accompanied by 700 *Ulemas* and *Sayeds* on his first visit to Kashmir in 1372, Sayed Ali Hamdani was received by the Sultan's younger brother, Qutub-ud Din. Sultan Qutub-ud Din (1373-89), who had gained considerable experience as an administrator while Shihab-ud Din had been busy with his conquests, continued with the

tolerant and progressive policies. Intellectual activities, music, art, charities and academic activities were encouraged by him.

Noor-ud Din or Nund Reosh was born (1377) to Salar and Sadra, during Sultan Qutub-ud-Din's rule. Sadra an orphan, was the adopted daughter of the *chowkidar* of Khai Jogipora village. According to legend, the child refused to take his mother's feed; and on the third day accepted his first feed from Lal Ded when she visited the distraught couple. *Yogini* Lalla named the baby "Sahzanand" and declared him as her spiritual heir. Henceforth, he came to be known as "Nund" or pious. The grand father of Nund, Ogra Teng was a Rajput landlord who hailed from the principality of Kishtwar, now a subdivision of the Doda district of Jammu. Due to a family feud, Ogra and his brother fled to Kashmir during the reign of Ramdev (1252-73), took employment as fort keepers (*Sanz*) of the lords of Tilsar (Badgam) and Duddar (Kulgam) where they settled down. Salar and Sadra, descendants from their lineage were acquainted at the Khankah of the brothers, Sayed Hussain Simnani and Mir Hussain Tajjuddin who had arrived earlier as emissaries of Sayed Mir Ali Hamdani before his visit in 1372. Ali Hamdani's second visit to Kashmir was made in the year that Nund was born; and the third one was in 1383 spanning over a total of 12 years. Sadra had met Hamdani before the child was born. The premature death of Salar, when Nund was still an infant led the despondent widow to seek solace from *Yogis* and *Faqirs*, with Nund in tow. Their discourses awakened the spiritual yearning of the precocious child. This impressed Sayed Hussain Simnani who christened the child "Noor-ud Din". The child felt increasingly drawn towards the company of spiritualists and consequently abandoned formal education. As a young man Nund Reosh cultivated the land of the *Nambardar* of Khai village and raised an excellent harvest. These fields, identified today as "Nega Neir", "Megh Theer" and "Baga Baren" have come to be associated with the supernatural powers of the Rishi. Married to "Zai", and with 3 children, Nund Reosh continued to spend

long hours discoursing with Sayed Simnani and meditating in a cave "Gufabal", which gradually became his permanent abode.

The tranquility and peace of the country prevalent during Nund's early boyhood was shattered at the accession of Sultan Sikander, the 7 year old son of Qutub-ud Din (1389-1413). Although brought up on a diet of secular ethos and married to a devout Hindu at a tender age, the young Sultan succumbed to the instigation of his Prime Minister Suha Bhat, a Brahmin convert to Islam. Together, they demolished the rich culture that the country had nurtured in both intellectual and materialistic terms. Proselytizing was vigorously enforced with mental and physical torture and massacre became the rule; and the Brahmin suffered the most. It is believed till today that only eleven Brahmins households survived this inhumanity in the Valley.

Mir Sayed Ali Hamdani's son Mir Mohammad Hamdani arrived in 1393 AD, accompanied by another 300 *Ulemas* and Sayeds. They brought with them the Persian culture, language and crafts thereby creating a "Miniature Iran" in the Valley. Though most of the missionaries were learned scholars and selfless savants of humanity, the artisans too were willing to teach their crafts to the local people who flocked to them to listen, learn and earn. This proved a great threat to the indigenous Kashmiri language and culture. Except for a handful of diehards proud of their heritage, most succumbed to this religio-cultural invasion. A formidable situation arose with a potential to either destroy or rejuvenate the local traditional culture.

It was at this time that the "*Reosh*" movement made itself felt in Kashmir. Ascetism had been a continuous tradition from pre-Vedic Kashmir through wandering *Munis*, Buddhist *Bhikshus*, *Trika Yogis* with whom *Sufis* of Western Asia shared a common belief in monotheism and egalitarianism. Sufis believed in *Khizr* and were inspired by the memory of Baba Tahir (500 A.D). They lived a simple life robed in a gown of coarse wool (*Suf*), from which interestingly the term Sufi is

derived; with a pair of wooden sandals (*Khadao*) and a begging bowl (*Kashkol*) as their only worldly possessions. When entrapped in the whirlpool of a rapidly spreading Islam to their land, they chose to interpret the *Quran* in a mystic way. Persecution by a rising Islamic orthodoxy forced them to seek refuge in a Kashmir that was already a home to monotheistic casteless *Trika* Shaivism. *Reoshism* in Kashmir and the *Bhakti* movements in India are a gift of Jalalud Din Rumi (1207-73), who inspired Nanak, Kabir and Mirza among many others.

It was Noor-ud-Din who revived the *Reosh/Rishi* movement through his extensive tours of the Valley, accompanied by Baba Nasar-ud-Din who can be considered as one of his chief disciples. He held philosophical discourses with Lal Ded, other *Yogis*, *Faqirs* and saints clarifying or modifying his own views or theirs. Conversion of Bum Sadhu a Shaiva scholar, of Bumzua has been recorded in both *Reshi Nama* (Compilation of Saints Works) and *Noor Nama* (Compilation of Nassar a poet in his own right). Besides Bum Sadhu (Baba Bam-ud-Din) other converts, Sanskrit scholar Tazi Bhat (Baba Taj-ud-din) and Kanti Pandit (Baba Qutub-ud-Din) were very close to the Reosh. Kanti Pandit, a Sanskrit scholar of high repute scribed Nund Reosh's "*Watsans*" (poems) in *Sharda* immediately after they were uttered or composed which does not find any mention in the writings of the Persian scholars who perhaps were not conversant with the *Sharda* script. This document though of immense importance, has not yet been traced and appraised by those who would like to interpret the *Reosh* philosophy in modern humanistic terms. Dawood Khaki's *Rishi Nama* (1521-85 AD) and *Noor Nama* (1630 AD) by Nasib Gazi, a disciple of Khaki are exclusively in Persian based on the available popular oral sayings. Dawood Miskkti provides an exhaustive account which indicates the contributions of this eminent saint to the enrichment of Kashmiri language, literature and philosophy.

Nund Reosh had a large number of disciples, the closest of whom was Nasr-ud-Din who took charge of Tsrar after the

demise of the saint. Most of his "Watsuns" are addressed to Nasru.

He says :

"The body exposed to the cold river winds blowing,
Thin porridge and half boiled vegetables to eat.
There was a day O, Nasru;
My spouse by my side,
A sumptuous meal and a fish to eat,
There was a day Nasru".

Legend has it that Nund Reosh was one day invited to the royal banquet. Being attired in a "Pheran" of coarse wool, he was stopped at the palace gate. He returned dressed elegantly in "Kimkhab" and "Jamawar". When the feast was served he dipped his sleeves into the gravy of the delicious "Wazavaan" dishes. When asked, he replied "the feast is not for Noor-ud-Din, it is for the costly clothes". He relates this incident to Nasru thus:

"There in those halls, dazzling with the glitter of nobles and lords,

Where even the great were refused permission to enter;

Where I saw *Houris* singing, dancing or

Dusting them with brooms made of yak tails,

Now there I have seen cotton being grown

O, Nasru, I have seen better,

Now thou goest and seest for thyself".

Reosh confides a complaint against ignorant people in God, saying :

"The love is he who burns with love,

Where self doth shine like gold.

When man's heart lights up with the flame of love,

Then shall he reach the infinite.

With narrow-minded selfish interest,

For petty desires of paradise,

And for dreadful awe of hell,

They worship thee my Lord".

Disappointed by the forces that conspired to make quotidian existence difficult by the ever soaring inflation, Reosh laments alongwith the housewives, an echo of the present times:

"Bad days are ahead,
the fuel shall become scarce like sandalwood,
Salt shall be costlier than sugar,
Edible oil more precious than perfumes.
When the autumn crop shall ripen simultaneously
With the spring crop.
When both mother and daughter shall leave home
hand in glove and spend the day and night with strangers.
The source fountains shall dry up,
The street gutters shall flow brimful,
And then monkeys shall rule the country".

The Reosh is not ashamed for being poor or begging for food and says :

"*Nar* begs and *Narayan* begs
Ishwar begs with a bowl in hand.
The Ram of *Dandkaaryana*, also begs,
Why should poor have hesitation to beg".

A social reformer at heart, Reosh ridicules the ills that prevail in society and laments :

"The old and infirm Pandit shall search
A virgin girl as his wife.
Even if he be very near his pyre,
He will never prefer a widow as his life partner".
He decried and lambasted both *Mullahs* and *Pandits* who

sold God at the mosques and temples :

"These talkative Mullahs,
With long, dyed beards,
Deceitful is their sweet speech,
They are liars.
Mullahs have become merchants of mosques,
The Pandits steal the idols from temples.
One among thousands of them may deserve salvation,
Others are all the disciples of Satan".

Reosh raises a question that has dogged secular people till now :

“Why this hatred, oh my Lord,
Between the two children from same parent?

How shall the Lord be pleased,

Both with Hindus and Musalman”.

He is appreciative of the hospitality of the impoverished Kandi village women even though they can offer no better than coarse grain and wild fruit, the product of this beautiful land, in the verses:

“The poor women of Kandi area,

Do not possess either a head dress or a *pheran*.

In spite of this they entertain the guests,

Though their diet is barley flour and wild fruit.

The beehives provide white honey in abundance

The Kandi areas are so beautiful,

Nuts are cheap produce of Kandi.

In such abundance the bears too cannot eat all.

Its edible kernel produces oil in great quantity,

The Kandi areas are so beautiful”.

Lal Ded had directed Sadra saying ‘Let thee take care of my spiritual son and heir’ when Sahzanand or Nund Reosh was born. Throughout his life he acknowledged his foster mother’s high spiritual status and the guidance it provided him. He had also acknowledged lessons he learnt from a mute girl of Bhavan (Martand) village, from Yavan Masti Nartaki and Seddhamol, the *Shaiva* Scholar *Guru* of Lal Ded. The devotional songs dedicated to their memory are still recited with the same dedication in the Sufi shrines and mosques.

The centers of Reoshi order organized by Nund Reosh all over Kashmir remained open to progressive ideas while also preserving the essence of Buddhist and Shaivite philosophies. This approach motivated even the rulers of that time to patronize this cultural revolution, and tried to continue the traditions with its original color, character and essence to make it an ongoing process.

What Nund perceived was that Kashmir could not survive if it lost animate to innate catholicity. He also realized that without social inputs at the grassroots for the emancipation of the common people nothing could be achieved. He moulded Islam so that it filled in the cosmopolitan tolerance, a hallmark of Kashmiri culture. With an agony at heart, he crusaded at an entirely different level for a synthesis that could keep people away from want, selfishness, hate and material greed. He aroused consciousness of environment, encouraged planting of shady and fruit trees, respecting the streams and keeping them pure. He restored self-respect and dignity to the people of the land.

The poet-philosophers Lal Ded and Nund Rishi were thrown up by the need of the hour, as the saviors of the culture and language of Kashmir. They appreciated the positive qualities of man like honesty, justice, service, sacrifice that are beneficial to man and incorporated these in their own lifestyles to inspire others. They were instrumental in the renaissance of the socio-cultural tradition of Kashmir. Even today "*Sufiana-Kalam*" does not begin its musical concerts without paying homage to the memory of Lal Ded and Reosh by singing her "*Vakhs*" and his "*Shruks*" or sayings. To Lal Ded and Nund Reosh, the first philosopher poets, goes the credit of protecting the language of the common people, and elevating it to the status of a court language. Thus, inspite of the prevalent elitist Sanskrit and Persian, they brought moral values and tolerance within the reach of the so called down trodden, ignorant, masses. They gave the people an identity, unity, equality and a composite culture which according to "*Reosh*" belief would retain itself till the day of resurrection. The people in return immortalized them by preserving their writings and sayings—a great gift to the people in the tradition of *Smritis*.

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NOTE A: Lal Ded's Vakhs have been collected and translated by Sir Aurel Stein, George Grierson (1875-90 AD); Richard Templeton and DD Barnett (1875-900) and Prof. Jayalal Kaul who after a critical assessment verified only 138 Vaks as that of Lal Ded.

NOTE B: Sheikh, Title used for converts from Brahmin or Kshatriya.

Chapter 4

LALLESHWARI, THE SUBLIME SONGSTRESS

L.N. RAINA

India has over the ages produced saint-poets who have influenced the course of spiritual and cultural history of this ancient land. A few that come to mind immediately are Nanak, Nizami, Kabir, Tulsi, Surdas, Tuka Ram, Namdev, Gyaneshwar, Mira, Baba Farid, Thyagaraj and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

These saint-poets have appeared in different ages and at different places, but they left their imprint much beyond the confines of time and place.

Kashmir has not lagged behind in contributing to the spiritual and cultural attainments of the country. But few could combine in themselves the spirituality of the highest order and unmatched poetic excellence as did Lalleshwari who had arrived on the scene at a crucial period of Kashmir's history when the onrush of foreign Muslim influences was getting fused with the local Hindu traditions to emerge into a composite culture.

Lalleshwari, reverentially and affectionately called Lal Ded or Lalamoj (Mother Lalleshwari) by Hindus and Muslims alike was a great Shaiva philosopher of the 14th century who left a lasting impact on the culture, literature and everyday life of Kashmir. Though she is considered a proponent of Shaivism yet her philosophy encompasses *Upanishadic* wisdom along with Sufism and the teachings of the Buddha. Lalleshwari

preached through her *Vakhyas* (sayings mostly in verse), love, equality of all human beings irrespective of social status or religious belief, tolerance of other people's views, non-violence and, above all, relentless search for the ultimate truth. Her *vakhyas* have left such an impress on the Kashmiri language that most of its proverbs, aphorisms and idioms are derived from them.

Kashmir has been the cradle of Shaivism. The basis of Shaivism is that man is Shiva himself in a state of forgetfulness. The goal is the mental evolution from a lower to a higher consciousness, from a conditioned to an unconditioned existence. The purpose of human existence is to discover the relationship between the divine existence and the world around us. To escape from the troubles and tribulations of life we have to be free from desires and to have the knowledge of the Divine *Shakti*. *Shiva* is absolute and whole but in its manifested state becomes *Shakti* which is part and parcel of nature.

The basic difference between Vedanta and Shaivism is that according to *Vedanta* the manifestation of the universe is false, whereas according to Shaivism, it is based on *Shakti*. The apparent world, to the Shaiva philosophy is a thing for enjoyment while according to the *Vedanta*, it is false and fleeting—an illusion.

The lofty philosophy of Shaivism had fallen on evil days when that unique and most eminent saint-poetess, Lalleshwari, came on the scene. Those were troubled days when famine, pestilence and internecine wars had caused large-scale destruction. Disunity and disorder had led to armed conflicts and the rulers had lost the capacity to rule. Religion had been debased into Tantric practices, sorcery, black magic and grotesque ritual devoid of any meaning. Hinduism, which at one time had embraced in its fold the Greeks, Shakas and the Huns, had become so petrified and effete that it had closed its doors to further assimilation of new immigrants who eventually turned round and attempted its destruction with a vengeance. With this decadence and demoralisation in the political, moral

and spiritual life of the people had descended a long night of ignorance and intolerance on the beautiful valley of Kashmir.

Then came the dawn with the birth of Lalleshwari to stride across the reign of four Sultans, Allauddin (1348-60), Shahabudin (1360-78), Kutubuddin (1378-94) and perhaps Sikandar *Butshikan*, the idol breaker (1394-1417). Enowed with an uncommon inborn sensitiveness, Lalleshwari could not but be influenced by the situation around her. There is therefore a refrain of sadness running through her earlier poetry giving an idea of the state of the land and her own domestic troubles.

Lalleshwari came from a Brahmin family of the village Pandrethan near Srinagar. She was just 12 years when she was married off to a village bumpkin who could not care less for her. Her mother-in-law was a sadist who used to torment her with or without a pretext. It is said she would spin the finest yarn, as fine as the fibre of lotus stalk, yet her mother-in-law would throw it away scolding her for its coarseness. In short, she gave Lalleshwari inhuman treatment, in season and out.

The story of her maltreatment is preserved in a Kashmiri proverb. "Even if they (her inlaws) are feasting on a whole sheep, Lalla will always have the stone for her dinner". As the legend goes, the mother-in-law used to place a *Kaajwath* (a handy well-rounded stone used in Kashmir to grind spices) in her platter, covering it thinly with rice to make it look the normal heap. When her father-in-law accidentally found it out and got furious with his wife, Lalleswari's misery increased as the mother-in-law then turned to poison the ears of her son against his defenceless wife.

Lalleshwari displayed an unusual spiritual awareness even from her childhood which was beyond the comprehension of the people around her who could not appreciate it. She, however, came under the influence of the family priest, Siddha Shrikanth, whom she ultimately surpassed in spiritual attainments. Lalleshwari pursued Yoga until she succeeded in reaching, what she called, the "abode of the nectar". She had reached such a high point of knowledge and spiritual exultation

that she became oblivious of her surroundings and so completely liberated from human frailties that she tore up her garments and giving up her seclusion started roaming up and down the Valley preaching the gospel of love and humanism.

In her sojourn, the philosopher-poetess came into contact with the Muslim Saint, Shah Hamadan, who had sought refuge in Kashmir from persecution in his own country, Hamadan. It appears that she was much influenced by his *Sufi* philosophy. Shah Hamadan was himself impressed by her philosophy and returned the respect shown to him. Lalleshwari had reached the spiritual stage where religious bigotry of narrowmindedness has no place.

Lalleshwari's teachings known as *Vakhyas* (*Vakh*), travelled down the corridors of time by word of mouth till the early years of the present century. Towards the close of the 19th century, these *Vakhs* were collected and translated through the efforts of Sir Aurel Stein and Sir George Grierson. And Dr. Barnett rendered them into English verse. Later, some eminent Kashmiris, among them Prof. N.L. Kaul, Anand Kaul Bamzai, Prof. J.L. Kaul and Sarwanand Charagi brought out further editions of her sayings, which have preserved this priceless literature for posterity.

Lalleshwari teaches freedom from desire. She says knowledge of the self gives ultimate release. Whether a man leads the life of householder or a hermit, man's aim should be to gain release from rebirth. For this he should realise that the individual self is one with the Universal Self. She relates her spiritual experience in these words

"Passionate, with longing in my eyes,
Searching wide and seeking night and day,
Lo I behold the Truthful one, the Wise,
Here in my own house to fill my gaze.
That was my day of lucky star.
Breathless, I held Him my guide to be
So my lamp of knowledge blazed afar".

Translated from Kashmiri

Dilating again on her experiences, she says :

“ Why art thou feeling with the hands like a blind person.

If thou art wise, get inside.

Shiva is there; do not go anywhere.

Friend, put thy trust in my word”.

To reach the goal of self-realisation she said :

“Every moment I taught *Onkar* to the mind,

I was myself reading and myself hearing,

From *so ham* (I am He) I cut off *aham* (I am).

Then did I, Lall, reach the place of illumination.

It is the self (ego) which creates a wedge between.

Jiva (the living) and *Parmatma* (the Ultimate).

When this ego is destroyed do we reach

The pure consciousness, the *Parama Shiva*”.

She preached unity of the Self with the Supreme Self thus:

“Why art thou twisting a rope of sand

Man of the tow path?

With such a line, how shall come thy vessel to the land ?

How shall follow thee that ship of thine?

Hath not *Naran* written in the fate?

Only thine own effort may create

Union betwixt the Self Supreme and thee”.

Again :

“Lord, I have not known myself other than myself.

Continually have I mortified this vile body.

That Thou art I, that I am Thou, that

These art joined in one, I know not”.

Lalleshwari found religious practices of no use and called them futile as an untwisted rope for towing a ship :

“With a thin rope of untwisted thread,

Tow I ever my boat over the sea.

Will God hear the prayers that I have said?

Will He safely over-carry me”?

Lalleshwari reiterated what had been said in the *Upanishads* on separating the fruits of work from the duty to work, to save oneself from disappointment and delusion :

"If thou take and rule a kingdom
Even then there is no respite.
And if thou give it to another, still
The heart is not content.
But the soul that is free from desire will never die.
If while yet alive, it dies,
Then alone comes the true knowledge".

She made a scathing attack on the futility of idol worship:

"Idol is of stone, temple is of stone,
Above (temple) and below (idol) are one.
Which of them shall thou worship, O foolish Pandit?
Cause thou the union of souls".

She taunted the priesthood for offering sacrifices (of sheep) to idols which was common during those days:

"It (sheep) covers your shame,
And protects you from cold (with its wool).
It feeds on grass and drinks water, the nature's gifts.
Whoever asked you, O, stupid Brahmin
To offer it as a sacrifice to propitiate a stone idol"?

And she condemned hypocrisy and cried out against sham:

"The thoughtless are reading books
As a parrot is repeating Ram Ram in a cage.
They are reading and re-reading
As if they are churning water,
To them self-love has increased.
Reading is easy but acting upon it is difficult,
I forgot these scriptures by excessive practice,
The living bliss became assured to me".

Lalleshwari preached eternal truths that are common to all religions. It matters little, she philosophised, by what name the Supreme is called. He is still Supreme. Or, how does it matter what a man is or what his work or his livelihood may be, so

long as he sees the Supreme properly?

In her *Vakhs*, she propounded the genesis of the cosmos in *Vedantic* terms and identified the microcosm with macrocosm. To attain the eternal beauty, she advocated the annihilation of duality and merger with the Supreme :

“If truly thou graspest what non-duality meaneth,
Thy individuality will disappear.

Concentration on one God destroyeth one’s ego,

God is one but the conflict of duality goes on,

Though He is pure and colourless, He has

stricken man with pigment (in his mind)”.

Lalleshwari is not only a great philosopher and saint, but an equally great poetess. She laid the foundations of Kashmiri literature on which came to be built a wonderful edifice by eminent philosophers and poets like Sheikh Nooruddin, Parmanand, Haba Khatoon and Roopa Bhawani, as well as of the composite culture of Kashmir with its inborn tolerance for one another’s religion and belief. By her reverence of Shah-i-Hamadan, she set an example for the Muslims of Kashmir to revere Hindu saints and seers like Peer Pandit Padshah and herself and for Hindus to show respect for Muslim divines such as Nunda Rishi and Shah-i-Hamadan.

Her *Vakhyas* brought about an intellectual upheaval in Kashmir. They struck the deepest chords in the minds of the people and became instrumental in ushering in an era of mutual tolerance under the enlightened reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, the Budshah. Indeed, they continue to be sung by both Hindus and Muslims even to this day, which bring a unique solace and calm even to a highly troubled soul.

Lalleshwari was the forerunner of the saint-poets of medieval India, like Kabir, Nanak, Surdas. Tulsidas and Tukaram. Her *Vakhyas* resemble more Guru Nanak’s teachings than the devotional songs of Surdas or Mirabai. She of course did not form a sect. Yet she did not forsake the multitude or retire into her shell. She made devastating comments on the conduct and behaviour of the religious leaders of the time.

A revolutionary at the core of her heart, Lalleshwari deprecated all that was bad, false or cruel. For her mankind was one and she saw Shiva in everything. She preached non-violence in thought and deed. The composite culture she initiated was an admixture of nondualistic philosophy of Shaivism, self-realisation of Buddhism and mysticism of Islam. Indeed her contribution to the spiritual, literary and cultural heritage of Kashmir has been unparalleled.

Chapter 5

THE THEATRE IN JAMMU : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

R.N. SHASTRI

In my view the foremost question that scholars investigating the tradition of the theatre in Jammu must address themselves to is whether there has been any folk tradition of drama in this region. What I have gathered in this regard, in association with my co-investigators in the field, reveals that such a folk tradition had certainly grown up at Basohli in Kathua district and at Ramnagar in Udhampur district (within Jammu region) and beyond the Ravi in adjacent Kangra district.

This folk-theatre was called *Bhagtan* (भगतां) and the actors performing various roles were called Bhagats (भगत). Interestingly, a tradition of folk-theatre is still alive in the Valley of Kashmir, especially in the rural parts of Anantnag district, which is known as *Bhand Jashan* (भांड जशन) or *Bhand Pathar* (भांड पथर). It is intriguing that in this tradition too the word *bhagat* is used to designate an actor and also the organizer. One can reasonably infer that perhaps the tradition of folk-theatre in Jammu region and that in the Valley of Kashmir were linked in some way, though no precise conclusions can be drawn regarding their inter-relationship.

The existing tradition of *Bhand Pathar* in Kashmir is being sustained and kept going by several theatrical troupes. Of these troupes, the one headed by the late Subhan Bhagat, has achieved national fame and recognition in the country. The

folk-drama *Shikargah* that was performed by this troupe, depicting and satirizing the high handedness of the feudal administration during the pre-1947 period under Dogra rule, was considered a signal achievement. It has made history as far as the tradition of *Bhand pathar* in Kashmir is concerned.

It is pertinent to mention here, what a former colleague of mine in the Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Jammu, Sri Jitendar Sharma has observed in one of his articles about the *Bhagtan* tradition of folk-drama as it existed in the Dogra region :

"These folk-artists (actors) caricatured moneylenders, 'dandimar' (डंडीमार) shop-keepers, immoral owners of property including landed estates, fraudulent *Purohits* and *Pujaris*. In addition, they also performed some specific roles based on religious stories, especially those connected with *Krishna lila*, to entertain the audiences. They also visited houses of the villages in Kashmir that were inhabited by Dogra families (which were exempted by the State Government from paying land-revenue, hence called *Sarkari Maphidar* (सरकारी माफीदार). In these villages, the artists presented their dramatic performances. (Translation mine).

Another significant feature of the *Bhagtan* folk-tradition of Jammu was that the actors who performed the roles of various characters, mostly belonged to scheduled caste families and were, naturally, illiterate. They would sit together, discuss the theme of the play (that was to be performed), prepare an outline of it and then assign a role to each individual actor. Thereafter, they staged the play in the open ground of the village or town—on some 'platform'. The *Bhagtan* tradition has survived to this day in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.

Even today, people in Kangra visit a religious shrine for the fulfilment of a cherished desire—they invoke the blessings of the local deity in this regard and, in return, promise that they would have a *Bhagtan* play performed in their village when their wish is granted.

It is not known for sure why, and how exactly, the *Bhagtan* tradition of folk-theatre died altogether in Tehsil Basohali and elsewhere in Jammu region. Even, until this tradition survived in the border areas of Jammu, groups of *Rasdharis* (रासधारी) (folk drama troupes) would come to Jammu from Uttar Pradesh and present their performances, that were witnessed night-long, with fervour, by large crowds of men, women and children. At the end of a performance, the spectators offered cash liberally to these performing artists, who collected it in a plate (थाली) sent round for the purpose.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 AD), a 17 year old boy of Jammu region, Jagat Ram, was so much fascinated by those *Raslila* performances that he fled to 'Mathura-Vrindavan' (मथुरा-वृंदवन) to learn the art himself. His love of the art, his spirit of devotion and the melodious quality of his voice were enough qualifications for him to be accepted as a pupil by one of the *Ras Mandalis* (रास-मंडली). The promising boy learnt the art well with single-minded devotion. In particular, he learnt by heart some specific *Raslila* themes in mixed *Braj* (ब्रज-भाषा) and Hindi (खड़ी बोली). Besides picking up the related dances and the accompanying musical tunes, he also learnt how to perform the roles associated with these themes. Tormented by the memory of his home, he returned to Jammu, having resolved in his mind to pursue his career as a *Rasdhari* (रासधारी) here and excel in the art. As he became an accomplished artist, Vazir Punnu (वजीर पुन्नु) one of the ministers of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, once called him to his residence in village Dhok (ढोक), near Nagrota town, where he and his troupe performed *lilas* for the minister's enjoyment, Vazir Punnu was so much impressed by the performance of this local *Mandali* that he obtained the approval of the Maharaja to his proposal for permanent absorption of this group of artists in the *Dharmarth* (धर्मार्थ) Department. They were provided jobs as musicians, on a regular basis, in the famous Raghunath Mandir of Jammu. These artists also

performed *Rasalilas* on specific festive occasions. However, with their regular appointment in the temple, they ceased to be mobile performers; this adversely affected the tradition of *Rasalila* as a folk-art. A provision was made in article 17 of the constitution of Dharmarth Department to make the following obligations :

- (i) Morning and evening programmes of devotional music shall regularly be offered at Sri Raghunath Mandir.
- (ii) A *Raslila* shall be performed on the eleventh *tithi* (तिथि) of every dark fortnight (क ष्णपक्ष) in Sri Raghunath Mandir.
- (iii) On the eleventh *tithi* of every bright fortnight (शुक्ल पक्ष) a *Raslila* shall likewise be performed in the Gadadhar (गदाधर) temple of Jammu.
- (iv) On the fourteenth *tithi* of every bright fortnight a *Raslila* based on any of the themes of *Shiv Puran* shall be presented in Ranbireshwar Mandir (रणबीरेश्वर मन्दिर) situated near the Parade Ground.

That is how things stood in 1830 A.D. This situation continued until the year 1892 A.D. when Maharaja Pratap Singh was the ruler of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. His rule lasted from 1885 to 1925 A.D. In the year 1892 A.D. the Dharmarth Council passed a resolution, by virtue of which the *Mandali* of musicians (*Rasdharis*) was disbanded and in its place a dramatic club, titled *Sri Raghunath Theatrical Company* was established. Some of the artists of Pandit Jagat Ram's *Rasmandali* were inducted into this drama club and the rest employed as singers in some of the temples of Jammu.

Bhagat Jagat Ram did not join this theatrical company but his two sons, Pt. Pyarelal and Pandit Durga Dass did. Both the brothers achieved fame and distinction as actors. In the newly established Sri Raghunath Theatrical Company, some significant recruitments were made. Master Rahmat a Muslim artist was appointed the Headman of the Company; under him two Muslim actors, Nanak Bakhsh and Bhai Massan, were also

provided jobs. A *Pacca* stage (मंड़ुआ) for the dramatic performances was built on the premises of Sri Raghunath Mandir itself. With the *Durbar* Move, this theatrical company also shifted annually to Srinagar during summer and presented plays at Vasant Bagh. During winter, the company performed plays on the stage specially built for the purpose in Sri Raghunath Mandir. Though these plays were mostly based on religion themes yet some based on social, *Pauranic* (पौराणिक) and erotic themes were also staged.

The tradition of folk-theatre in Jammu region, gradually faded away and the theatre began to get inextricably tied up with the 'stage'. A remarkable change that took place was that while Dogri was used conspicuously as the medium of communication in *Bhagtan* folk-theatre, a mix of Braj and Hindi was used in the *Rasalilas* connected with Mathura-Vrindavan. On the other hand, *Urdu* was predominant in the dramas performed by *Sri Raghunath Theatrical Company* established by the Dharmarth Department.

Sri Raghunath Theatrical Company was functional for a period of 11-12 years, from 1892 to 1904 A.D. It was wound up in 1904 under the orders of Maharaja Pratap Singh. Around this time, a new activity connected with theatre began in the city of Jammu (relatively a small city then). A new 'stage' was set up on the premises of the *Diwan Mandir* built by Diwan Jwala Sahai, who had functioned as the Prime Minister of Maharaja Gulab Singh. The activity gained momentum with the establishment of an "Amateur Theatrical Club", Jammu, under the patronage of Maharaja Pratap Singh and some of his functionaries. The Maharaja had also organised a cricket-club for the amusement of the British officers of the Residency. It was Thakur Ram Krishan (of Punjab) who captained this team and also headed the Amateur Theatrical Club. Most artists of this club were State Government employees. They performed plays for personal diversion and amusement. The Club staged plays in Urdu mostly, that were written by Aga Hashra of Benaras and other playwrights.

It was around this time again that some Parsi theatrical companies staged plays in Jammu, which thrilled the spectators and also captured the imagination of the local artists connected with the theatre. These Parsi theatrical companies that deserve mention were :

1. *Victoria Company (Bombay)*, that visited Jammu in 1898 A.D. in response to an invitation from the ruling Maharaja to stage its plays on the occasion of the *Mundan* ceremony (hair-cut ritual) of Hari Singh, then a child.
2. *Surya Vijay Company (Bombay)*, that came to Jammu in 1921, having been invited to present plays on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of *Raja Jagat Dev*, of (Poonch), adopted son of Maharaja Pratap Singh.
3. In 1925-26, *Madan Theatre of Bombay* performed plays on the occasion of the coronation of Maharaja Hari Singh.

The stage-craft and professional skill displayed by the artists of these Parsi companies so much impressed the artists of the 'Amateur Club' and those of the other theatrical clubs in Jammu that they began to adopt their style of presentation in the belief that they would thus improve their own performance. The result was quite the reverse—playing the "sedulous ape" had a worsening effect on their performance.

When Captain Rama Krishan, Lala Krishan Chand Katyal and other artists of the "Amateur Club" attained superannuation and retired, the Club gradually lost its cohesive character and having gradually lost its earlier zeal that flourished under the patronage of the State Government, it dwindled away. Then, however, another theatrical company emerged, which was known as "*Sanatan Dharm Natak Samaj*". However, another theatrical company "*Vir Abhimanyu Natak Samaj*", established in 1929-30, functioned as a keen rival of the 'Amateur Club' for 5-6 years. It was patronized by Lala Kanshiram Agrawal, a whole-sale cloth dealer of Raghunath Bazar, Jammu and Pandit Dev Raj, Chief Administrator of Sri Raghunath Mandir.

All these theatrical societies, it may be observed, were not interested at all in promoting the native language, art and culture. On the other hand, the plays they staged chose to poke fun at the economic plight of the people of this region, its language (Dogri) and culture to all possible extent, in disregard of the dominance of prevailing Dogra feudal administration. Sri Dinu Bhai Pant, the first prominent Dogri poet, had the courage to portray the miserable plight of the local population in these words:

लोग मीणे मारदेएह 'डोगरें दा राज ऐ',
डोगरें दा हाल मन्दा, जुड़दा नेई साग ऐ।।

[*Loge meene mardain 'ai dogren da raj hai'*,

Dogren da hall manda jud-da nai saag hai]

(people deride us saying that "Dogras rule here", so bad is our plight that we cannot buy a meal).

However, some sparks of light were visible here and there even in that dismal period of an autocratic rule steeped in feudal apathy towards the poor and downtrodden. Thus, in 1935 A.D. in Ramnagar a town of Udhampur district, a teacher, innovative and revolutionary in spirit, dared to write a short play in Dogri titled *Achhut* (अछूत—The Untouchable) and had it staged under his direction in the town, where people were very conservative in outlook. That teacher was my elder brother, Sri Vishwanath Khajuria. He had to face the wrath of the local administration and the local conservative elements. He was transferred from the town and the manuscript of his play remained 'buried' somewhere for long in that town.

With the dawn of independence in 1947, people in our country started realizing the importance of national and regional languages, native arts and culture; they felt the need to preserve and promote them. For the first time in the long history of Jammu (extending over centuries), a cultural society like *Dogri Sanstha*, Jammu was started in Feb. 1944 in the region. A patriotic son of the soil, Comrade Dhanwantri (a comrade of *Shaheed* Bhagat Singh), who had suffered tortures for about 17 years in the Punjab prisons and *Kala Pani* (Andaman Jail)

during the British rule, returned to Jammu in 1948 A.D. out of love for his homeland. He was at that time a broken man physically. He not only provided political guidance, based on sound principles, to the local people, but also made most of us aware of what constituted our cultural heritage and how it should be preserved. In consequence, the Dogri language, which had suffered humiliation and neglect in the land it was spoken, retrieved its prestige and breathed a free air. When *Dogri Sanstha* was established (in 1948) only two books written in Dogri were available in printed form. These were works originally written in Sanskrit i.e. *Leelvati* (लीलावती) written by a 12th century astronomer and *Shrimad Bhagwadgeeta*.

The number of poets, short-story writers and playwrights etc. who jointly campaigned for the all-round development of Dogri language and literature in the forties went on swelling steadily. After the play *Achhut* (in 1925), another play *Bawa Jitto* (बावा जीतो) was written and staged in 1948. The stage-actors of the *Dogri Sanstha* undertook the responsibility of performing *Bawa Jitto* in the villages and towns of Jammu region. Around the year 1950, the play *Naman Gran* was jointly written by Shastri, 'Pant' and Abrol. It was presented by the actors of the *Dogri Sanstha* in all prominent villages and towns of the Dogri-speaking region. This play was performed by them on about fifty occasions in different places. In or around the year 1960, Dinoo Bhai Pant wrote a Dogri play titled *Sarpanch* (सरपंच). Like *Bawa Jitto*, this play too was based on the life-story of a self-sacrificing folk-leader Data Ranpat (दाता रणपत) of Birpur village. It was also performed in many villages of Jammu region by the actors of *Dogri Sanstha*. All these Dogri plays served to rid Dogri of its inferiority complex with the result that Dogri dramatic clubs grew up in different villages of the Jammu region. A regional office of the State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was set-up in Jammu in 1960. The Academy too organized theatre-workshops in Jammu with the object of promoting the writing and presentation of plays in various languages. At the same

time, a programme of organizing dramatic competitions annually in every district of Jammu was also started by the Academy. Such drama festivals are still held annually in districts of Jammu. On these festivals, competitions are held not merely to adjudge the best productions from among Dogri plays but to evaluate the plays produced in other languages too—Gojri, Pahari, Panjabi, Hindi and Urdu.

The story of the development of Dogri drama from the short play *Achhut* (1935) written by Sri Vishwanath Khajuria to the dramatised version of the novel *Mahabhoj* (1990) is quite impressive, showing how from small beginnings and in spite of great odds (hampering its growth) it evolved as an art form, and attained both respectability and social recognition. The period 1950-1990 brought to the fore a number of playwrights and stage actors who made a significant contribution to the growth and development of the Dogri theatre.

Till date about 25 plays in Dogri and an equal number of plays translated from other languages into Dogri have been published. The playwrights and translators include Prof. Madan Mohan, Narsingh Dev Jamwal, Dinu Bhai Pant, the present writer and a few other names.

While at present many drama clubs have sprung up in the city of Jammu and its suburban areas, most artists who have enrolled themselves in them are heard complaining that no suitable Dogri plays capturing the variety of their social life that they would like to present on the stage, are available to them. This scarcity of appropriate materials in the field of native drama in Jammu should be a matter of concern for our creative writers.

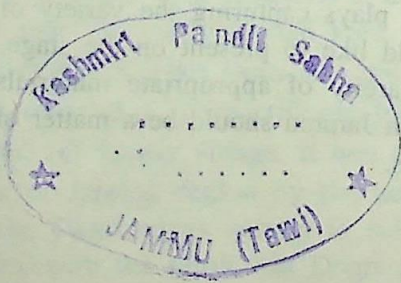
There is a programme of organising dramatic competitions annually in every district of Jammu was also started by the Academy. Such dramatic festivals are still held annually in districts of Jammu. On these festival competitions are held and efforts to educate the people in other languages plays but to evaluate



The story of the development of drama in Jammu is short but rich. After the 1947 partition, the drama movement in Jammu (JAWI) is due to the dramatic movement in Jammu and in the rest of the world. It is evolved as an art form and attained both respectability and social recognition. The period 1950-1960 brought to the fore a number of playwrights and stage actors who made a significant contribution to the growth and development of the Jammu theatre.

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While at present many drama clubs have sprung up in the city of Jammu and its surrounding areas, most of them who have enrolled themselves in them are heard complaining that no suitable Dogri plays are available in the field of drama. This is a common complaint in the field of creative writing.



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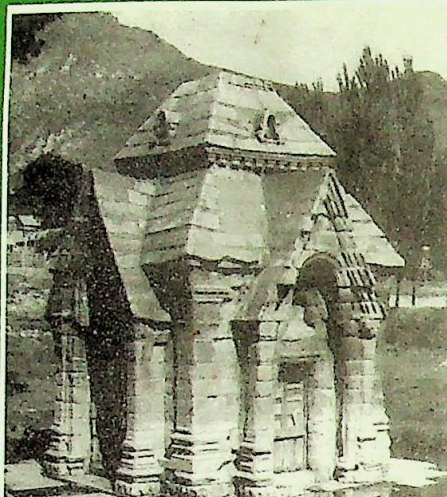
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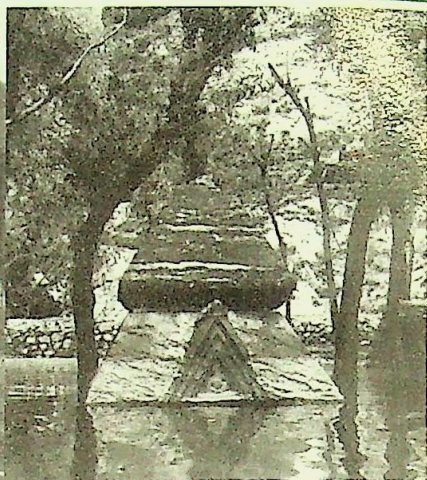
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